

THE HOLLYWOOD NOVEL: AN AMERICAN LITERARY GENRE

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A Dissertation  
Presented to  
The School of Graduate Studies  
Drake University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctorate of Arts

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by  
Nancy Brooker-Bowers  
September 1983

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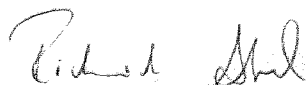
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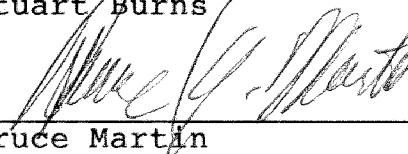
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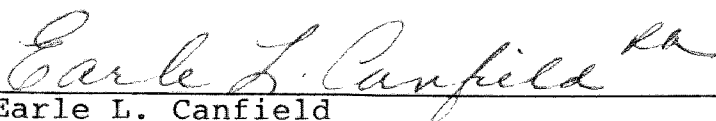
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## THE HOLLYWOOD NOVEL: AN AMERICAN LITERARY GENRE

An abstract of a disseration by  
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September 1983  
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The Hollywood Novel is an American regional fiction genre that treats characters working in the film industry either in Hollywood or with a Hollywood production company on location. Although pre-Hollywood film novels set in the eastern filmmaking capitals flourished as early as 1912, the Hollywood Novel per se first appeared in 1916, after the film companies had nearly completed their move to Hollywood.

The genre grew up and developed with the Hollywood film industry, mirroring the rise of powerful moguls, the decline of the studio system, and the advent of location shooting, in the United States and abroad, as well as influential events, public concerns, and fads of the times.

From 1916-1963, the genre intersected with other popular literature, creating eight sub-genres of novels: historical, comic-epistolary, detective, and semi-pornographic--as determined by Carolyn See in 1963--as well as romances, adolescent fiction, religious tracts, and romans à clef. Many novels within the sub-genres were penned by persons involved with filmmaking.

After 1964, novels written by people within the industry and romans à clef, as well as historical and detective Hollywood Novels, continued to flourish and reflected more contemporary concerns: current politics, including espionage; feminism; alternative life styles, such as homosexuality; and the counter-culture movement. As the studio system waned and foreign cinemas exerted influence, location shooting became commonplace. Hollywood, thus, declined as a picture-making center, and a strong adjunct genre of location and international filmmaking novels developed. In addition, novels which were not about filmmaking and which dealt with the characters' Hollywood experiences peripherally, if at all, became common.

The novels' setting--the town of Hollywood--has been overwhelmingly influenced by the film industry and the illusions it produces, so that, as in the movies, anything is possible there, but nothing is as it seems. The symbiotic



relationship between the town and the industry is reflected in the novels, the only American regional genre determined by a specific industry. In them, distinctions between illusion and reality collapse, owing to the timelessness, artificiality, physical unconventionality, unusual atmosphere, and the reality/illusion dichotomy at work in Hollywood and the film industry.

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## INTRODUCTION

This study examines the historical development of the Hollywood Novel, an American regional fictional genre that treats characters working in the film industry either in Hollywood or with a Hollywood production company on location. In sheer numbers alone--my own count is in the 700's for the period 1912-1981--these novels are an imposing presence in our literature and take their place alongside those of other popular American genres such as detective, mystery, and western fiction. Hundreds of them have been best sellers in this country and abroad. Some are ephemeral and of little literary value; others are regarded as good popular literature. A number of the novels, however, have a more lasting place in our literature by virtue of being written by novelists who are regularly treated in university literature courses: F. Scott Fitzgerald (The Last Tycoon), Nathanael West (The Day of the Locust), Norman Mailer (The Deer Park), William Saroyan (Rock Wagram), John O'Hara (Hope of Heaven and The Big Laugh), Horace McCoy (They Shoot Horses, Don't They? and I Should Have Stayed Home), and Joan Didion (Play It As It Lays), to name a few.

Despite the fact that Hollywood Novels and other novels about filmmaking or people involved in filmmaking have been

written since 1912 and are so numerous, there has been relatively little literary criticism dealing with them. Novels that are regarded as "serious" by virtue of being written by critically well-received writers, such as West, Fitzgerald, and Mailer, for examples, are frequently treated in scholarly writing. But literary attention for the genre as a whole has been sporadic and scant.

Only two book-length studies of the genre exist: Jonas Spatz's Hollywood in Fiction: Some Versions of the American Myth (1969) and Walter Wells's Tycoons and Locusts: A Regional Look at Hollywood Fiction of the 1930's (1973). Franklin Walker's A Literary History of Southern California (1950) and Edmund Wilson's The Boys in the Back Room (1941) treat Hollywood Novels and their authors in passing and in a somewhat condescending manner as part of larger overviews of California literature. Leslie Fiedler attempts to debunk Wilson's claims about the genre and, later, to place the genre within American literature of the 1930's in essays appearing in Man and the Movies (1967), edited by W. R. Robinson, and his own Waiting For the End (1964), respectively. Only four other anthologized essays on Hollywood Novels exist. Periodical articles dealing exclusively with the genre are equally scarce: there are merely four, published in 1940, 1948, 1955, and 1961.

Four dissertations have treated the subject. Virgil L. Lokke's "The Literary Image of Hollywood" (State University of Iowa, 1955) applies a Marxist critical approach and deals

largely with anti-Semitism in the genre. Erik Richard Hazel's "The Hollywood Image: An Examination of the Literary Perspective" (Case Western Reserve, 1974) attempts to explain the negativism in the Hollywood Novels by prominent novelists who also wrote Hollywood screenplays. Bruce Lewis Chipman's "America's Dream-Dump: A Study of the American Hollywood Novel" (Tufts University, 1981) examines the genre as a symbol for the collapse of the American Dream.

But by far the most ambitious and comprehensive study of the genre to date is Carolyn See's "The Hollywood Novel: An Historical and Critical Study" (University of California, Los Angeles, 1963). She endeavored to codify the various facets of the genre and to establish definitional parameters; in addition, she provided a 513-entry bibliography of Hollywood Novels and related novels which were partially set in Hollywood. See's study is considered a landmark in critical work on the genre and most of the subsequent writing about Hollywood Novels refers and/or defers to it. Because of this, I have chosen to focus, in part, on the See dissertation in my study.

My study first traces the history of the genre, to show how it parallels and is shaped by the development of the American film industry. Then a close analysis of Carolyn See's dissertation critiques her definition and classifications for the Hollywood Novel through 1963. In my own research, I eliminated many of the novels in See's bibliography which do not qualify as Hollywood Novels and were erroneously

included in her study, annotated the remainder of her entries which do qualify, and added some 400-500 more which she either failed to include or which were written after her dissertation was completed. This work has enabled me to make judgments about the accuracy and reliability of her assessments and redefine the Hollywood Novels of this period based on my own findings and ideas.

A third section describes the course the genre has followed from 1964 to 1981. I show the effect on it of the decline of Hollywood studio filmmaking, the advent of location filming, and the thriving of foreign cinemas; and I detail the influence of contemporary concerns, politics, and lifestyles on the novels. A fourth section summarizes the genre's characteristics and singles out its regional nature as one of its primary facets. This section also examines the symbiotic relationship between the town of Hollywood and the film industry and the effect that relationship has on the genre, particularly in terms of the blurring of distinctions between reality and illusion.

My research on the Hollywood Novel genre has occupied the better part of four years. I began with Carolyn See's bibliography, filling out the incomplete bibliographical entries for each novel and providing a full annotation for each. Her overly-brief annotations categorized the novels with only phrases from definitions established in her dissertation. Mostly, these revealed little about the novels' contents. I annotated the novels by reading them (or, if

they were not available, by reading several reviews of each), by describing the plots, and by making some sort of evaluative comment. The bibliography of primary sources at the end of this dissertation lists all novels from this research which were cited in the text but presents them without annotations.

In addition, I supplemented her bibliography by including entries she had omitted but which are provided by Alice Kesone Melcon's California in Fiction (1961) and Newton D. Baird and Robert Greenwood's An Annotated Bibliography of California Fiction: 1664-1970 (1971). Another source which proved helpful was James Robert Parish's Hollywood on Hollywood (1978), a volume that treats Hollywood films which have as their subject matter Hollywood itself. Because these films were often made from Hollywood Novels, I discovered there many other titles.

The Baird and Greenwood bibliography not only supplemented See's research but also helped cover the period from 1964 to 1970. To double-check this period, as well as to bring my research up through 1981, I read the fiction reviews of reviewing services, primarily Library Journal, to locate titles. It was a painstaking process to read all the reviews for all contemporary fiction to ferret out those novels having filmmaking and Hollywood as their subjects. Again, either the books or several reviews for each not available were read to provide annotations. Reviewing sources that proved helpful were Book Review Digest, The New York Times

Book Review, the book review sections of the New York Herald Tribune, Saturday Review, The New Yorker, Time, and Newsweek, among other periodicals which regularly review fiction. Throughout the project, the Inter-Library Loan Department of the Iowa State University Library retrieved hundreds of novels for me to read and annotate.

The result of this research is the most comprehensive treatment the Hollywood Novel genre has received to date. The large numbers of titles and the huge volume of material I uncovered and read provided me with the raw material that I shaped into the following dissertation, a largely bibliographical study which seeks to document and classify the historical development of the Hollywood Novel genre and to identify its important and unique contribution to American regional literature.



## CHAPTER 1

### Fiction and the Film Industry: The History and Development of the Hollywood Novel, 1916--1981

Novels about film and filmmaking pre-date the industry's move to California. In fact, they began to be written almost as soon as the films themselves took on a story-telling aspect and while filmmaking was still concentrated in the East. At the turn of the century, viewers watched what were called "actualities." These often showed well-known people performing the feats that made them famous, such as Buffalo Bill Cody shooting a gun or James J. Corbett boxing; or they might feature unknown dancers performing or a train passing by. Movie-goers were fascinated by these novelties; but when films began in 1903 to take on a narrative framework with Edwin S. Porter's The Life of an American Fireman and The Great Train Robbery, the public was enthralled; and their fascination with the medium has continued to the present.

The popular literature of that early time began to reflect the public's interest in movies as a narrative form and, in turn, for the first time moving pictures and people associated with them became suitable material for fiction. Still, the intelligentsia scorned films as the lowest possible form of expression, seeing them as pastimes for children and illiterate adults. The middle class considered them

immoral and distasteful; and many people regarded them as "toys," as a passing fad. So, the first film novels were aimed at the audience which viewed and appreciated moving pictures--the young and the poor.<sup>1</sup>

The earliest film novel I have discovered is Victor Appleton's Tom Swift and His Wizard Camera; or, Thrilling Adventures While Taking Moving Pictures (1912). This book purportedly is written for adolescent boys; and, apart from the novelty of the movie camera that Tom Swift invents, it is not very different from others in the Appleton canon, including the "Don Sturdy" series in which Don, like Tom, is resourceful, courageous, plucky, and inventive and eventually triumphs through great perseverance against seemingly insurmountable odds and villainous detractors.

The only difference here is that what most readers would have considered an unusual gimmick is given play. Tom has invented a magical camera that takes pictures automatically. He is hired by a movie producer to travel the world and send back pictures of earthquakes, native insurrections, and other sorts of things akin to the "actualities" the public flocked to see. All the while, he is menaced by Wilson Turbot, a jealous villain. The basic story is not new, but one single element--the moving picture camera--is. Because the medium was only in its infancy, the mechanics of it interested

<sup>1</sup>Carolyn See, "The Hollywood Novel: An Historical and Critical Study," Diss. Univ. of California, Los Angeles 1963, p. 10.

readers; and so the somewhat simple-minded story that emphasized a set of morals could be relatively secondary to these matters. Appleton continued to write film novels but developed a whole new set of characters for them: "The Motion Picture Chums" and, later, "The Moving Picture Boys" and, even later, "The Movie Boys." These novels were written from 1913 through 1916 and were re-released in 1926 and 1927 under slightly altered titles. There were fourteen different novels, in one form or another, which placed the boy pals in various situations where they could make, act in, or display films while solving mysteries, helping the needy, or aiding the government as in, for examples, The Motion Picture Chums' New Idea; or, The First Educational Photo Playhouse (1914), The Motion Picture Chums' Outdoor Exhibition; or, The Film That Solved a Mystery (1914), and The Moving Picture Boys at Panama; or, Stirring Adventures Along the Great Canal (1915). These fictional serials bear resemblance to the adventure-filled movie serials so popular with audiences of the time.

Simultaneously, Laura Lee Hope (this name, like "Victor Appleton," is a pseudonym), the creator of "The Bobbsey Twins" and the "Bunny and his Sister Sue" series for adolescent girls, wrote several novels which featured "The Moving Picture Girls." The first one, The Moving Picture Girls; or, First Appearances in Photo Dramas, appeared in 1914 and featured two sisters, Alice and Ruth DeVere. They and their father break into movies with the New York-based Comet Film Company, which travels to various locations to capture on

film unusual or exotic exteriors like the snowy backwoods of New England or the "wilds" of a pre-Disney World and pre-land development Kissimmee, Florida.

These six novels, which appeared through 1914 and 1915, differed from the Appleton series in that they were intimately about the business of making moving pictures. All the action, for the most part, takes place on the movie sets or on location shooting trips; and all characters, apart from some villainous outsiders, are members of the film production crew. Because the plots have to do with films and filmmaking, the novels provide a wealth of information about picture-making of the time and often focus on particular pieces of filming equipment in some detail. This may show that, as the movies were becoming more complicated and polished, the viewing and reading public's interest in how they were made was growing. Although the Hope novels are a cut above the Appleton books in terms of literary accomplishment, they still imply a relatively unsophisticated and naive audience.

Up to about 1909, most filmmaking was done in the eastern United States. Film companies were located in New York City, New Jersey, and Chicago; so the Appleton and, in particular, Hope books reflect that fact. However, after January 1909, things began to change.<sup>2</sup> At that time, Thomas

<sup>2</sup>"Motion Picture Patents Company," The Oxford Companion to Film, ed. Liz-Anne Bawden (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 481.

Edison organized the major film companies of the day into The Motion Picture Patents Company, a group that, together with the primary film distributors and with film stock manufacturer George Eastman, formed a virtual monopoly on equipment, materials, and distribution. Independent producers who tried to by-pass this monopoly were harrassed and arrested.

California began to beckon filmmakers; not only did it provide a substantial physical distance from the eastern Patents Company, but Mexico was close and offered escape from law officers seeking illegal equipment and films. In addition, the warm climate and plentiful sunshine permitted ideal year-round outdoor shooting conditions for interiors and exteriors alike that were unavailable in the East. Some companies had sought these variables in northern Florida, as we see in Laura Lee Hope's The Moving Picture Girls Under the Palms; or, Lost in the Wilds of Florida (1914), but found themselves still too near the Patents Company's scrutiny.

The monopoly began to collapse in 1911 and 1912 (although it was not officially declared illegal until 1917); but by then, the independent film companies were well-entrenched in California. The first companies filmed there in 1906 and 1907 and the first studios were established in 1911. D.W. Griffith had worked there in the winter months of 1910, 1911, and 1912, eventually moving there permanently. And more filmmakers followed, settling in small, quiet sub-divisions such as Edendale and Hollywood on the outskirts of Los Angeles. It was this area that would

give birth to the Hollywood Novel, a new type of American regional literature created through a symbiotic relationship between film and literature that fed on the public's fascination with "movies."

The first Hollywood Novel I have been able to locate, that is, one set totally in that region, is B.M. Bower's The Phantom Herd, a 1916 adventure romance detailing the exploits of a Los Angeles film company making a western picture. In the next several years, there were a few novels which continued to treat, in part at least, east coast filming operations: Edward J. Clode's The Love Story of a Movie Star; or, The Heart Story of a Woman in Love (1915), Arnold Fredericks's The Film of Fear (1917), Edward Phillips Oppenheim's The Cinema Murder (1917), Mark Lee Luther's Presenting Jane McRae (1920), and Nina Wilcox Putnam's West Broadway (1921). But, aside from later historical novels, such as Virginia Tracy's Starring Dulcy Jayne (1927) and a few others, almost all novels about filmmaking were set in the new and intriguing environment of Los Angeles and, in particular, of Hollywood.

The town quickly became a symbol for the fantastical glamour of the movies. What captured the public's imagination was the aura generated by the film industry that sprang up there, an industry whose products promised fame, success, money, eternal youth, and perfect sex.

The term "Hollywood" quickly came to mean much more than a specific town on the map. It represented--and still repre-

sents--a cultural phenomenon which encompasses not only the film business and people associated with it, but also certain life styles and attitudes. These matters have always, even from the very earliest books, done more to create setting in Hollywood Novels than geographical facts have done. Throughout the years, there have been novels which sold widely because they were simply set in Hollywood, even though very little about actual Hollywood was dealt with in them, and they cannot be classified as true Hollywood Novels. What the readers of the earliest (and most recent) Hollywood Novels hoped to discover in the Hollywood Novels they read was, in reality, an intangible. As an established Hollywood resident tells a newcomer in Liam O'Flaherty's novel Hollywood Cemetery (1935), "It's merely an illusion. It's a point of view, not a place. A mirage."<sup>3</sup>

So the town of Hollywood, the focal point for the genre, is a mirage shimmering in the southern California desert. On the one side, there is the eastern United States, where the surge of western migration began. On the other is the ocean, where the westward push met its end and left the migrants stranded and frustrated at their new-found stationary state. The seekers of a new frontier turned back in on themselves and came to rest in Los Angeles. Their frustration, in combination with the exotic climate, produced a

<sup>3</sup>Liam O'Flaherty, Hollywood Cemetery (London: V. Gollancz, 1935), p. 13.

decidedly bizarre atmosphere, where the only frontiers remaining were those within; and seeking those, the Angelenos invented and subscribed to all manner of cults, isms, religions, and life styles, creating a most favorable culture for the film industry organism to grow and thrive in.

At first, the native Los Angeles residents were apprehensive, suspicious, and baffled by the intruders; they confused the artists with their medium and called the film people "movies."<sup>4</sup> These initial attitudes quickly faded and the picture people were embraced whole-heartedly and their brand of created reality, based on illusion, was accepted not only as accurate but as desirable. And this acceptance was not peculiar to southern California; it existed nation-wide and, eventually, world-wide, as Hollywood films permeated the consciousness of the public. What happened in Hollywood was what people wanted to read about in newspapers, fan magazines, and novels; and it was what they got.

There were a number of factors at work in the early Hollywood Novels that played upon what the public desired. Clearly, moviegoers and readers were still interested in the mechanics of the relatively new medium, as evidenced by Margaret Turnbull's The Close-up . . . . (1918), in which open-air studios and location shooting are described in some detail. Although not a Hollywood Novel per se, Stephen Vincent B  net's The Beginning of Wisdom (1921) includes chap-

<sup>4</sup>Kevin Brownlow, The Parade's Gone By . . . . (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), p. 34.



ters that show the protagonist Philip Sellaby working in Hollywood during 1917 and 1918 and that dwell on the mechanics of filmmaking. Arthur Benjamin Reeve's The Film Mystery (1921) concentrates on methods of picture making primarily because it has as its central dilemma the murder of a movie star while she is performing before the cameras (this situation became a much-used convention in later Hollywood Novels).

Another thing the public demanded was intimate knowledge about the film stars themselves. The eastern producers had always kept the names of their actors unknown, referring to them by titles such as "The Vitagraph Girl," "The Biograph Girl," etc. because they feared increased salary demands if they became popular under their own names. When the west coast filmmakers began raiding the eastern companies for talent, just such a development occurred.<sup>5</sup> The film stars were "sold" to the public through elaborate and, often, exotic publicity and became widely popular. Because of the fan clubs that grew up around them and because of the attention they received in the fan magazines and other periodicals, they claimed they were indispensable to the movies' success and exacted high salaries which, in turn, enabled them to lead the sorts of glamorous lives the public relished reading about.

<sup>5</sup>"United States of America," The Oxford Companion to Film, ed. Liz-Anne Bawden (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1976), p. 715.

Hollywood Novels of the late teens and early 1920's, therefore, began treating individual fictional stars and their personal lives. At the same time, there was a gradual diminishing in details about the actual making of films. Soon, it became standard for the novels to be primarily about the fames, fortunes, problems, and triumphs of the film actors or other personnel, such as directors, producers, screenwriters, extras, etc., and to be only secondarily about actual filmmaking. This trend, with very few exceptions, continued over the decades and is still at work in contemporary Hollywood Novels.

For example, although Margaret Turnbull's The Close-up . . . (1918) is invaluable for details about filmmaking in 1916 Hollywood, the story actually turns on the love life of silent film star Kate Lawford, a woman for whom fame and wealth prove insufficient and who seeks a more fulfilled life through a relationship with a very secretive and yet heroic man. Henry Kitchell Webster's Real Life, Into Which Miss Leda Swan of Hollywood Makes an Adventurous Excursion (1921) chronicles the off-screen exploits of a very popular Mary Pickford type silent star and marks the beginning of a long and vital roman à clef tradition in Hollywood Novels that has only increased in volume over the years. The public's fascination not only with western movies but also with the cowboy stars themselves is reflected in the somewhat unusual 1922 Hollywood Novel, Told Under a White Oak Tree, which lists as its author "Bill Hart's Pinto Pony." William S. Hart is

cited as editor of this humorous account, from the horse's point of view, of the cowboy actor's filming a western on location in southern California.

The superficial aspects of the Hollywood stars' lives attracted the public who saw their fancy cars, elegant clothes, and whirlwind social lives as the epitome of glamour. But they were also intrigued by the darker side of the Hollywood scene: the alcohol, drugs, and sexual scandals that seemed so pervasive in the early 1920's. Although these matters are commonplace today, they were novel aspects of celebrity careers in those times. Never before had such things been so blantly revealed about people in the public eye. The Fatty Arbuckle trials in 1921, the still unsolved drug and sex-triangle murder in 1922 of director William Desmond Taylor, and the drug-induced deaths or plunges from fame of such stars as Wallace Reid and Mabel Normand were front-page news.

The public's morbid curiosity was counterpointed by its sense of moral outrage at the goings-on in Hollywood. Several novels of the 1920's mirror that ambivalence. For example, Nina Wilcox Putnam's Laughter Limited (1922) can have it both ways: Hollywood is seen as a treacherous and evil place for heroine Bonnie McFadden; but, through her perseverance, talent, and honesty, she finds success in pictures, despite the attempts at corruption by the influential film people surrounding her. Infidelity that brings about tragedy is the subject of Phyllis Gordon Demarest's Children of Hollywood

(1929). Edgar Rice Burroughs makes the villainous Wilson Crumb, a man who entangles innocent young girls in his bootlegging and drug-trafficking schemes, a principal character in The Girl From Hollywood (1923).

The most blatant description of drug use, however, is found in Edward Stilgebauer's The Star of Hollywood (1929) which, although originally written in German, was translated into English by E.E. Wilson and widely circulated. The plot involves a rivalry between two screen sirens, one an infamous "morphomaniac" and cocaine user who is murdered by the other. The latter subsequently overdoses herself on morphine and cocaine when her guilt is revealed. There is little moralizing here and little optimism for the future of picture people; the details of the story are simply presented in a straightforward way.

These novels no doubt fed the public's curiosity about Hollywood wild life and scandals and also may have had some influence on the creation of the Hays Office in 1926 and, in the 1930's, the Legion of Decency, both founded in an attempt to clean up not only the movies but also the private lives of the stars who made them. Two 1932 novels, John Gorman's Hollywood's Bad Boy and Jack Preston's Screen Star, both deal with the disastrous effects of the Hays Office's so-called "morals clause," which, in part, kept well-known stars from marrying and, therefore, ironically forced them into illicit unions.

There were two Hollywood Novels of the early 1920's,

however, which were unabashed in their positive tones and attitudes toward the film capital and its inhabitants. Rupert Hughes's Souls For Sale (1922), despite the suggestion of its title, heartily defends aspects of Hollywood--such as children performing, women exchanging their sexual favors for roles, and Fatty Arbuckle being freed by the courts--frequently criticized by other novels and by public spokesmen of the time. Its heroine, Remember Stedden, is an innocent and naive small town girl, a minister's daughter who is forced to run away to Hollywood. There, she finds success and comes to see her occasionally unhappy mental state as a result of a rigidly puritanical upbringing rather than the Hollywood environment, a viewpoint diametrically opposed to the standard moral precepts of the time and of other novels.

The other exceedingly positive novel of this period was the classic Merton of the Movies (1922) by Harry Leon Wilson. It satirizes the simple and very unclever country grocery clerk Merton Gill, who looks like a famous cowboy actor he idolizes. Merton goes to Hollywood, gets work with a film company that makes parodies, and, unknowingly, stars in pictures which lampoon his hero. All the while, he is untroubled and gleefully oblivious, thinking that Hollywood is a very fine place indeed. Everything works out happily for all involved; even those who are manipulating him seem harmless enough. This novel was originally serialized in Saturday Evening Post during 1922. It was filmed three times--once in 1924 and again in 1947, under the title Merton of the Movies,

and another time in 1932 as Make Me a Star. It inspired the George S. Kaufman-Marc Connelly play Merton of the Movies, the George S. Kaufman-Moss Hart play Once In a Lifetime, the 1923 film Mary of the Movies, and the 1927 film Polly of the Movies. This may well be one of the most influential of all early Hollywood Novels.

The most noticable and significant factor in the Hollywood Novels of the 1920's and 1930's, however, is the authors' seeming total lack of perception about what was actually transpiring in the film industry of the period. This was the heyday of great comedy films and masterful comedians like Chaplin, Keaton, Langdon, and Lloyd. It was the period of exotic stars like Rudolph Valentino and Gloria Swanson and foreign presences such as Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich. It saw a total revolution in picture making as sound was introduced. The studio system was solidified under the direction of powerful moguls like the Warners, Louis B. Mayer, Adolph Zukor, and others. Individual directors such as King Vidor, Frank Capra, Howard Hawks, and William Wyler were emerging as talented and significant creative forces. It was certainly one of the most formative and lively times in the history of Hollywood, yet the Hollywood Novels of the period give no indication of understanding this. They continued to ignore filmmaking per se, despite the fact that that process presumably gave Hollywood--the setting for the novels--its existence.

Instead, they concentrated on what they knew would sell

novels--fictional individuals, living and working in Hollywood and their own, usually small, problems, whose real life counterparts were publicized by the studios. There were light romances featuring stars and would-be stars, murder mysteries set in film studios or homes of stars, misadventures of aspiring stars, but nothing that couldn't have been set in virtually any other period in the history of Hollywood.

The only novel of the time which seems even remotely interested in the advent of sound is Victor Appleton's Tom Swift and His Talking Pictures; or, The Greatest Invention on Record (1928). Here, the plucky Tom adds a "radio machine" to his previously invented "wizard" camera; this enables it to send as well as receive and links sight with sound. He is menaced by movie producers who fear competition; but he, naturally, triumphs.

This period and its rich contribution to film art is, however, frequently treated in detail in much later historical novels such as Samuel Anthony Peeples's The Man Who Died Twice; A Novel About Hollywood's Most Baffling Murder (1976), and Fitzroy Davis's Through the Doors of Brass; A Novel of Hollywood (1974), among others. It may be that historical hindsight was required to see the true significance of that prolific era. It is likely that readers of that time were not interested; they were in awe of the fantasy of Hollywood rather than its reality, an awe that the moviemakers perpetuated to their own advantage.

By 1930, the genre had been in existence long enough to spawn satire of its subject. In that year, two novels appeared which began a satiric tradition in the genre which continues still. Two brothers, Carroll and Garrett Graham, caused a furor with their Queer People. The novel traces the exploits of an irresponsible east coast reporter, Theodore Anthony White ("Whitey"), who drifts to Hollywood and there, by a series of accidents, becomes involved, after a fashion, in screenwriting. He is opportunistic, lazy, drunken, and unable to handle the rather large sums of money he makes for very little work. His cavalier attitudes and total lack of morals allow him to move in and out of various scrapes, including murder, relatively unharmed.

Not only is the individual character of Whitey satirized, but also there are unmerciful attacks on the Hollywood system and its personnel. Budd Schulberg, the son of a Paramount producer and author of two later Hollywood Novels of his own--What Makes Sammy Run? (1941) and The Disenchanted (1950)--has reported that the satire was so savage in the eyes of the various film moguls that any employee of a major studio found reading the novel could be fired.<sup>6</sup> The book was condemned for its anti-Semitism, as well as its irreverence. It did, however, establish certain characters--the tyrannical

<sup>6</sup>Budd Schulberg, Afterword, Queer People, by Carroll and Garrett Graham (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press; London and Amsterdam: Feffer & Simons, 1976), pp. 280-81.



mogul, the evil director, the alcoholic and irresponsible screenwriter, the amoral starlet, etc.--which would become stereotypes and conventions during the next six decades of Hollywood Novels.

Also in 1930, Elmer L. Rice (a pseudonym for Elmer L. Reizenstein) satirized in the fantastical A Voyage to Purilia how life was portrayed in Hollywood movies of the time. The narrator is one of two pilots who ride through space to the planet Purilia. They find there a rosy, misty atmosphere where standardized people carry out actions directed by the disembodied and mechanical voice of "The Presence" (who speaks in silent movie titles) to the accompaniment of background music. The Purilians, like movie characters, apparently have no digestive tracts--they never eat or eliminate--nor reproductive organs. Their lives are movie conventions presented through movie techniques. The narrator himself is caught up in a movie plot: he falls in love with a beautiful Purilian virgin, follows her through a series of dangerous incidents, and is reunited with her only to have her fade out in a film dissolve just as they repeat their marriage vows.

Apparently, however, the movie-going audience approved of what Rice considered puerile film conventions; for they flocked in record numbers to films in the 1930's. The economically difficult Depression years were a boon to the film business because the public sought escape from their grim lives through the fantasy of movies. But the wealth and happiness exhibited by these films acted as a lure to thou-

sands of young people who, believing the illusion of the movies was reality, traveled to Hollywood seeking their place in that fantasy. And the Hollywood Novels of the period reflect that migration.

Some of these novels were upbeat and lighthearted. Pollyanna of the famous series for adolescent girls visits the film capital in Elizabeth Borton's Pollyanna in Hollywood (1931), only to rejoice later in rejoining her wholesome home and happy offspring. In Harry Leon Wilson's Two Black Sheep (1931), a pair of innocents pose successfully as a prince and a socialite and take Hollywood by storm. A lovely young beauty contest winner auditions in Hollywood but gratefully returns to her pristine Iowa in Homer Croy's Headed For Hollywood (1932). Another Iowan--they loom large in Hollywood Novels--farmer Pa Boyer is incredibly successful giving agricultural advice to filmmakers and starring in "epics of the soil," while naive hillbilly Lem G. Whillikins finds rewards directing, filming, and acting in his very own movie (starring a cow) in Lynton Wright Brent's Gittin' in the Movies: Adventures of a Country Boy in Hollywood; Pitches by the Author (1936).

Nor is the lure of Hollywood only for Americans; by the 1930's, Hollywood was the dream-maker for the entire world. A Russian peasant, a simple girl from Cornwall, and a Viennese beauty seek their fortunes in the film capital in Leon Zolotkoff's From Vilna to Hollywood (1932), City Without a Heart (anonymous; 1933), and Olga Rosmanith's Picture People

(1934), respectively. Their presences in Hollywood Novels reflect the migration during this period to Hollywood of actors, directors, and film technicians from Europe.

Almost none of the thousands of people who were drawn to Hollywood in the 1930's found their golden dreams. If they got work in the movies at all, it was only as extras or bit players. With few exceptions, there were no real-life stories of people who succeeded in "getting in the movies," or "making it big in pictures," or "getting the big break." Some novels chose to acknowledge the pitfalls of Hollywood by mixing failure with success, by showing that being successful doesn't always insure happiness. The protagonists of Keane McGrath's Hollywood Siren (1932) and Donald Henderson Clarke's Alabam! (1934) find fame but never true happiness in Hollywood. Madeline Brandeis, who produced several Hollywood films, penned, on the basis of her personal observations, a book for adolescents which she apparently hoped would warn them about the dangers and dead ends of the film capital. Her Adventure in Hollywood; A Story of the Movies For Girls (1937) encourages aspiring starlets to stay at home where they will be safe and happy.

The somewhat inane Fanny Dopass of Richard Henry Lee's Nights and Daze in Hollywood (1934) is unknowingly victimized in Hollywood and naively reports her misadventures in a series of illiterate letters home. The novel is comical but nonetheless hints at the darker aspects of the lives of the many hopeful emigrants to Hollywood and at the hardships they

suffered. The female protagonist, a would-be screenwriter, of Dorothy Speare's The Road to Needles (1937) is totally defeated by Hollywood and takes the train home; Needles, California is the first stop on the eastward trip.

She escaped, but others were not so lucky. More often, the real-life seekers of fame met deprivation and, sometimes, starvation or even death. This grimmer side of the Hollywood situation of those times is presented in two novels by Horace McCoy, I Should've Stayed Home (1938) and They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1935). In the former, a defeated movie extra takes her own life. In the latter, Gloria Beatty pursues every possible route to Hollywood fame without success. Her last hope is a dance marathon in Santa Monica. At the least, she hopes to make a little money; at the most, she may be seen by a Hollywood talent scout or agent. When the marathon proves to be a fiasco, she entreats her dance partner, who is a similar loser, to kill her because she can't face going on as she has been. His dismal murder trial provides the novel's narrative framework.

Perhaps the most disturbing portrayal of the plight of those drawn to the mirage of Hollywood is Nathanael West's The Day of the Locust (1939). This novel depicts the frustrated "locusts" who have unwittingly "come to California to die." They live in Hollywood but are denied success or glamour. Because of their thwarted and unfulfilled dreams, they harbor a barely controlled violence which, when triggered, causes them to descend with their torches and baseball

bats to destroy and burn Los Angeles. In some ways, this is the most compelling of all Hollywood Novels for it captures so perfectly the blurred distinctions between illusion and reality at work in Hollywood itself, in the films produced there, and in the Hollywood Novels.

Also in the 1920's and 1930's an important element of Hollywood fiction grew strong. The detective genre so dominant in southern California regional fiction met up with the Hollywood Novel and the union created a popular hybrid. Actually, the first detective novel set in the film industry that I have discovered is Arnold Fredericks's The Film of Fear, published in 1917 and concerned with filmmaking in New York. The first detective Hollywood Novel is Arthur Benjamin Reeve's The Film Mystery (1921). This vital sub-genre will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

Along with the murder, mystery, and detection plots of Hollywood Novels of the late 1930's and 1940's, there was the continuing story of the person journeying to Hollywood and finding either success--usually with some limitations, as in Lee Shippey's If We Only Had Money (1939)--or failure. Most Hollywood Novels of the time were written strictly as popular literature for mass consumption. Light romances like Sophie Kerr's Love Story Incidental (1946) or comic romances like Goddard Lieberman's Three For Bedroom C (1947) flourished.

Occasionally, however, a Hollywood Novel of some stature, such as West's The Day of the Locust (1939), would emerge by a serious literary figure: John O'Hara (Hope of

Heaven [1938]), Aldous Huxley (After Many a Summer Dies the Swan [1939]), F. Scott Fitzgerald (The Last Tycoon [1941]), Christopher Isherwood (Prater Violet [1945]), and Evelyn Waugh (The Loved One [1948]).

The Isherwood novel, though set primarily in the British film industry, is usually treated by critics as a Hollywood Novel, perhaps because the German film director protagonist is assumed to emigrate to Hollywood at book's end. Huxley's novel is also included on lists of Hollywood Novels, possibly because it is set in Los Angeles and displays a sort of "goofiness" or unreality often associated with Hollywood Novels and because of Jo Stoyt's similarity to William Randolph Hearst, a man whose influence on the film industry was enormous. Also, Stoyt's mistress Virginia Maunciple, no doubt modeled on film actress Marion Davies, is a former Hollywood starlet.

John Dos Passos's The Big Money, published in 1936 as the last installment in the U.S.A. trilogy, while not a Hollywood Novel per se, contains a principal character, Margo Dowling, who becomes a Hollywood silent film star. In this novel, Dos Passos uses Hollywood--and Wall Street--as symbols of successful American money-making and as indexes to the American psyche.

But, popular or literary, the novels about Hollywood never ceased coming and never lost their appeal for the reading public. And that public attended movies zealously. In pre-television America, it was the major leisure pastime.

At the advent of WWII, there were 80 million admissions a week in the United States.<sup>7</sup> And that movie-going public understandably became quite familiar with the individual film studios--with their stars, with the types of movies they produced, and with their particular recognizable styles.

Beginning in the 1920's and continuing through the next two decades and into the early-to-mid 1950's, the Hollywood studio system, characterized by MGM, Paramount, 20th Century Fox, and Warner Brothers, for examples, held sway, presided over by powerful moguls like Samuel Goldwyn, Adolph Zukor, Louis B. Mayer, and Jack Warner. These men built up stables of stars over whom they had absolute control through unbreakable contracts, and they oversaw films being made in their studios from the first draft of the screenplay to the last post-production matters. They dictated, by means of sheer will power and block booking, what Americans would see and what they would absorb in movie theaters. They were all-powerful in Hollywood and, in a sense, nation-wide because the values, standards, and tastes of these few people virtually became those of the movie-going public.

It is not surprising, therefore, that omnipresent, despotic, and, often, despised film magnates are prevalent in Hollywood Novels written during the heyday of the studios. Most of the real-life moguls--for the most part foreign born or second generation Americans--began their careers in New

<sup>7</sup>"United States of America," p. 718.

York City, where they worked their ways upward from positions as glove and dress salesmen or junk and rag dealers to nickelodeon ownership. From there, it was a short step to film distribution and, then, to production in Hollywood. There, they established family dynasties and perpetuated their power through several generations.

These magnates are treated in a number of novels written during the zenith of the studio system's power. Budd Schulberg's What Makes Sammy Run? (1941) traces Sammy Glick (ne Sammy Glickstein) as he ascends from a New York ghetto childhood of utter deprivation through a lifetime of conniving, lying, and thieving to the position of Hollywood tycoon. Glick was widely believed to be based on a combination of real-life Hollywood personalities Jerry Wald and Norman Krasna. The fictional Silversmith family's rise through sometimes unscrupulous behavior is chronicled in Robert Carson's The Magic Lantern (1952), a novel frequently praised for its authentic technical background and detail and cited for its parallels to actual families involved in the growth of Hollywood.

Almost all of the powerful real-life moguls of this time were Jewish; by the 1930's, three-fourths of the major studios were Jewishly owned and controlled. Therefore, anti-Semitism--sometimes but not always partially veiled--was at work in many of these novels. One particularly blatant example is The Golden Egg (1946) by James S. Pollack, himself a motion picture producer and screenwriter. It portrays--as



had two earlier novels, Homer Croy's Headed For Hollywood (1932) and George and Lilian Chester's On The Lot and Off (1924)--the Jewish producers and their families in a most disparaging way. The moguls are seen as maniacally and sickly devoted to their families and homes. They eat gefilte fish, and because they are uneducated, speak broken, Yiddish-ridden English: "Keep tsivil de tongue, Momma!" or "En actah, my grennson? . . . not so lonk I should teck anodder breath!"<sup>8</sup> Their offspring are babied and promoted and given lucrative sinecures at the studios.

In Joseph Patrick McEvoy's Hollywood Girl (1929), the oafish Jewish studio heads hire supervisors to monitor employees so they can "keep Gentiles from becoming too artistic."<sup>9</sup> Even Nathanael West, himself a Jew, penned characters in The Day of the Locust (1939) who blame the fraud--"the amour and glamor"--of Hollywood on the Jewish studio bosses while grudgingly admiring their success. And Harry Greener in the same novel attributes his failure in Hollywood to the Jewish money men.

The real-life moguls were shrewd but were, in fact, for the most part uneducated or semi-literate, as in the case of Samuel Goldwyn. They were inwardly insecure about themselves and their films and felt that, if they could import well-

<sup>8</sup>James S. Pollak, The Golden Egg (New York: Holt, 1946), p. 19.

<sup>9</sup>Joseph Patrick McEvoy, Hollywood Girl (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1929), p. 22.

known, successful, and critically well-received eastern writers to create screenplays, they could attach a bit of "class" to the finished products. Goldwyn formed "Eminent Authors Inc." in an effort to bring literary talent to Hollywood. The other studios also hired famous writers; that is how people like Dorothy Parker, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Nathanael West, James Agee, James T. Farrell, Aldous Huxley, William Faulkner, and others ended up in Hollywood. With a few exceptions, notably Faulkner, most did poorly to moderately well as screenwriters. Scriptwriting is not like writing plays, novels, and short stories. It was the so-called studio "hack writers" who knew best how to keep dialogue and action moving briskly in the pictures.

The studio heads paid the renowned writers relatively well but had little sympathy for or understanding of their real needs. Most had miserable experiences in the film capital. Perhaps it seemed natural for the writers to blame their discomfort in Hollywood on the studio bosses because of their blind power and their absolute control over the lives and fortunes of their underlings, including the writers, and because of their unsophisticated literary tastes. This, and a natural tendency to disdain the movies (despite their often handsome pay) may account, in part, for the unflattering treatment of studio moguls in the Hollywood fiction created by these writers. To a degree, this can be seen in Nathanael West's The Day of the Locust (1939), F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon (1941), and Norman Mailer's The Deer Park

(1955), for examples.

In other Hollywood Novels of the times, the moguls are nearly always portrayed in an unfavorable light. The extremely stupid head of Mammoth Studios in The Puzzle of the Happy Hooligan (1941) by Stuart Palmer (who had worked as a studio screenwriter) wants to star Shirley Temple as Lizzie Borden. Big shot "Viv" Spender is a vile and callous murderer in Dorothy B. Hughes's Dread Journey (1945), while Dante Gabriel Rosettenstein and Puccini H. Mozart, in Noel Langley's Hocus Pocus (1952), are such mindless nitwits that the reader wonders if they could even locate their film studios if left to their own devices.

Libbie Block, however, in The Hills of Beverly (1957) portrays the moguls more favorably by modeling her prose on that of an eighteenth-century court diary and by lending the Hollywood studio power struggles some dignity by comparing them with European royal court intrigues. Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon (1941) gives mixed reports; it describes Monroe Stahr, modeled on MGM "boy wonder" Irving Thalberg, in a basically positive light while presenting his co-producer and rival Pat Brady, who parallels Louis B. Mayer, as a power-hungry tyrant.

It is impossible to over-estimate the power and influence of the film magnates and this, no doubt, explains why they loomed so large in Hollywood Novels written during the heyday of the studio system. They also figure prominently in more contemporary novels like Robert P. Eaton's The Body

Brokers (1970), in which all the old stereotypes are at work, and in others that are primarily historical, such as Garson Kanin's Moviola (1979) and Fitzroy Davis's Through the Doors of Brass; A Novel of Hollywood (1974).

By the early-to-mid 1950's, the moguls and the studios they controlled were losing their power due to a number of factors. The studios were hit hard by the breaking of the contract system which had virtually enslaved the film stars to agreements over lengthy time periods during which they could be loaned to other studios, used or not used, forced to act in pictures against their wills, or whatever the studio front office people wished. Independent producers were now able to get loans from banks for their productions and negotiated directly with the stars. A second factor was court action against the studios' monopolies on film distribution, which forced them to divest themselves of financial control of the theaters that guaranteed them outlets for their products.<sup>10</sup> In addition, the House Un-American Activities investigations and subsequent blacklisting caused internal dissension and deprived the industry of many talented writers, directors, and actors, such as Dalton Trumbo, Edward Dmytryk, and John Garfield.

But by far the most pervasive encroachment on film was by television. Radio had, for the most part, happily co-existed with the picture industry in the film capital for

<sup>10</sup>"The United States of America," p. 718.

years. A number of novels set in Hollywood in the 1940's and 1950's, including Milton M. Raison's Murder in a Lighter Vein (1947), James M. Fox's The Gentle Hangman (1950), and Helen Huntington Howe's The Success (1956), explore the Hollywood show business environment with a concentration on the radio industry.

Television was different, however. Its popularity was immense, and it repelled all attempts by the film studios to lure people back into the theaters through such gimmicks as 3-D, VistaVision, Cinemascope, and lavish productions. It further weakened the film industry by syphoning talent. Once regarded by the filmmakers as a passing fancy (it is interesting to note that they held similar ideas about sound films), television was firmly entrenched by the 1950's and its strength was evidenced by the numbers of novels set in Hollywood which turned their attention away from film and toward it: Steve Fisher's Giveaway (1954), W.T. Ballard's The Package Deal (1956), Robin Moore's Pitchman (1956), Benedict and Nancy Freedman's 1957 Lootville (a fictional name for Los Angeles and Hollywood), and William Campbell Gault's Death Out of Focus (1959).

With the decline of the studio system, there was a rise in independent productions. This is reflected by the fictional filmmakers who strike out on their own--often seeking a triumph of art over the sort of commercialism they associated with the studios--such as are found in Richard Brooks's The Producer (1951) and Stephen Longstreet's The

Beach House (1952).

Also on the decline was the number of films being made in Hollywood; filmmaking was now done routinely in foreign countries. In order to woo a viewing public whose film-going was no longer habitual and a public which, by and large, was made up of younger audiences that demanded more action and sensation, the studios made multi-million dollar spectacles like Ben-Hur (1959), Spartacus (1960), and Cleopatra (1962). Most of these colossal films were shot in Spain or Italy.<sup>11</sup> A novel of the time, William Denby's The Catacombs (1965), is a roman à clef about the filming in Rome of Cleopatra as told by an actress playing a handmaiden to Elizabeth Taylor. She comments on the making of the film, on the Eternal City, and on what she perceives as a sickness at large in America.

Novels about filmmaking continued to be set in Hollywood in the 1950's and 1960's, but there was a definite trend towards foreign settings where shooting was being done by Hollywood companies on location. William Murray's The Fugitive Romans (1955) and Irwin Shaw's Two Weeks in Another Town (1960) are both set in Rome. Two romans à clef were about director John Huston; Peter Viertel's White Hunter, Black Heart (1953) is set in Africa, and Charles Hamblett's The Crazy Kill (1956) fictionally and humorously (with Huston's blessing) portrays the filming of Moby Dick in the Canary Islands. Earl Conrad's Crane Eden (1962) details the pathe-

<sup>11</sup>"United States of America," p. 718.

tic attempts of an aging film star in the vein of Errol Flynn to prove he is still youthful while shooting a picture in the Caribbean. An immature starlet finds direction for her life while on location in Spain in Robert Carson's An End to Comedy (1963). And Henry Klinger's Lust For Murder (1966) is a detective novel featuring an American film company on location in Israel to film a spectacle about the Tower of Babel.

No Hollywood Novel takes location shooting to a further degree than does Harry Harrison's The Technicolor Time Machine (1967). Here, a studio uses a "Vremeatron," an invention which propels movie production crews backwards in time to film such actual events as the Vikings' travels. The studio hoped to save money by using this device because in the historical time spots the extras were numerous and cheap and the sets were very authentic.

During the late 1950's and the 1960's, American films, made in the United States or abroad, felt the competition of foreign film industries, particularly the British cinema because of the lack of a language barrier. Prominent English directors, like John Schlesinger, Lindsay Anderson, and Karel Reisz, were making films in England, such as Darling (1965), If . . . (1968), and Morgan (1966), which were immensely popular with audiences in the United States. American directors like Richard Lester and Stanley Kubrick, discovering a suitable climate for their work in Britain, began producing films there. From Italy came the "spaghetti westerns," which

featured American actors who played out stereotyped American western film roles in pictures produced by Italian crews and filmed in Italy. At the same time, French New Wave and other European films, such as those by Federico Fellini and Ingmar Bergman, found favorable receptions in art theaters and on college campuses, causing audiences to become aware of and to seek out non-Hollywood films, even those which might puzzle because of abstruse symbolism or a foreign language.

Hollywood was no longer the world's sole film capital, and many of the film novels of this time parallel what was happening in the American film industry in two ways: they were about the international cinema, and they were by foreign authors writing in English. Patricia Moyes's Falling Star (1964), Robin Maugham's The Green Shade (1966), and Paule Mason's Here Lies Georgia Linz (1968) are all set in the British film industry. Monica Stirling's The Summer of a Dormouse (1967) showcases a Danish film star, and Georges Simenon's Maigret's Pickpocket (1967), which was translated into English and sold widely in the United States, features the Paris filmmaking community. In a very real way, these novels and others like them marked the first encroachment on what, to that point, had been a strictly American genre.

Hollywood per se was in evidence less and less both in picture-making and in novels about that process. In the early 1970's, a concentration on location shooting and international filmmaking persisted. There was also a spate of novels which centered on international film festivals, in



particular Cannes, as in Bart Spicer's Festival (1970), Irwin Shaw's Evening in Byzantium (1973), and Geoffrey Bocca's Nadine (1974).

Films, filmmaking, and film personnel were still prominent in popular fiction, but they were beginning to be tangential to other matters. Many books began with a premise that involved filmmaking peripherally, perhaps capitalizing on the public's continuing fascination with the medium, but moved quickly on to other interests. For example, in Alfred Hayes's The End of Me (1968), a fifty-year-old screenwriter flees California and failure. That is as much of Hollywood as can be seen in the book. The remainder of the novel recounts his falling in with his young nephew and his free-living circle of New York friends. The novel ultimately is not about the protagonist's work in films but is an analysis of contemporary values and materialism. The fact that he is a Hollywood screenwriter is a detail important only in that it draws the reader into the book.

A raft of novels at this time used the same technique to comment on current political and social issues. In Arthur Arent's Gravedigger's Funeral (1967), a successful novelist and screenwriter returns to his ancestral Germany to uncover a band of neo-Nazis. Another screenwriter becomes embroiled in cold war politics and international intrigue when he innocently accepts a script job for a picture being shot in Tunisia in Patricia Highsmith's The Tremor of Forgery (1969). Two novels--Don McGuire's Floogle Street (1967) and Richard

S. Usem's The Face Behind the Image; Politics: Hollywood Style (1968)--satirically treat a washed-up Hollywood actor, clearly based on Ronald Reagan, who runs for the governorship of California as a right-wing candidate, with the focus more on politics than on movie-making.

It may be possible to see a parallel between this fictional attention to political and social concerns in film novels of the time and similar concerns in films produced in the 1970's: The Godfather, I and II, Chinatown, The Conversation, One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, All The President's Men, The Parallax View, Coming Home, The Deer Hunter, Apocalypse Now, and The China Syndrome, etc. There seemed during this period to be an awakened national consciousness, growing out of the late 1960's, to pressing issues of peace and war, individual privacy, governmental responsibility, leadership, and nuclear power. The film industry may have lagged somewhat behind the public's initial interest in these matters, but the ideas eventually were expressed on film.

The film novels of the 1970's also showed concern for social and political issues. For example, in Daniel Stern's Final Cut (1975), a member of the Kennedy New Frontier set is brought to Hollywood to save the film industry through his demographic know-how. In Macdowell Frederics's Black Work (1976), a power-hungry para-military group, led by a fading western film star, plots to assassinate the black Vice President and to establish a dictatorship. In 1979, Michael Mewshaw's Land Without Shadow commented on the political

climate in Africa in a story about an art director on location for a film who discovers nomadic tribes that are being systematically starved by their government.

Other subjects began to surface in the Hollywood Novels of the 1970's, concerns and trends at work in the American consciousness at large. The counterculture life style of the late 1960's which peaked and then diminished in the early 1970's is manifested in a number of novels, including, in part, Joan Didion's Play It As It Lays (1970). Gavin Lambert's The Goodby People (1971) commingles the Los Angeles filmmaking scene with the Los Angeles hippie scene by using a character who ferries between the two sub-cultures, acting as liaison. The Aristocrats (1977), a mystery novel by Gwen Davis, describes the bizarre results when a disaster movie crew on location comes in contact with a metaphysical meditation society holding its annual convention.

Later, the growing attention to and acceptance of homosexual life styles made possible Hollywood Novels with gay characters and situations, such as Paul Monette's The Gold Diggers (1979) and The Long Shot (1981), Richard Dorso's Thicker Than Water (1980), Robert Branit's Another Runner in the Night (1981), and Richard Friedel's The Movie Lover (1981).

The born-again Christian movement also expanded rapidly in the 1970's. In 1977, at the height of the evangelical revival in this country, Walter Bloch and Robert C. Munger, two self-professed born-again working in Hollywood, pub-

lished The Angel, the story of a failed film producer saved and ultimately taken to heaven by a young boy who is really an angel.

Drugs are prominent props in novels like Bernard Wolfe's Logan's Gone (1974), in which a screenwriter becomes embroiled in radical campus revolutionary politics. Drugs also figure heavily in Desmond Bagley's The Spoilers (1970). This and Reginald Hill's A Pinch of Snuff (1978), which focuses on the macabre "snuff" films in vogue at the time that purported to capture actual murders, take place in England, showing that film novels continued to be set in environs other than Hollywood.

The 1970's also were a fertile period for young, innovative, and, often, brash filmmakers. The breakdown of the studio system and the rise of independent productions had opened up new possibilities for filmmakers of all stripes. The work of many of these craftsmen grew out of the rich underground film tradition that had offered opportunity for personal statement since the late 1950's and early 1960's. Noel B. Gerson's The Golden Ghetto (1969), Jack Matthews's Pictures of the Journey Back (1973), and Joseph McElroy's Lookout Cartridge (1974) all treat young filmmakers who create counter-culture or avant-garde films outside the traditional film establishment.

Many of the non-traditional young filmmakers of the time were making documentaries, particularly about subjects that would appeal to a youth market. Two novels of the period

deal with the creating of a rock concert documentary similar to the 1969 Woodstock. The first, Norman Spinrad's Passing Through the Flame (1975), gathers an amazing assortment of characters together for this project: rock musicians, homosexuals, porno film actors, and underground filmmakers. The other, David Stern's Final Cut (1975), contrasts traditional and non-traditional approaches to film art by making the protagonist a mediator between an old-line Hollywood mogul and some young turks who are filming a rock concert festival documentary for his studio.

Other young filmmakers, like George Lucas, Stephen Spielberg, Francis Ford Coppola and, to a degree, Martin Scorsese, worked along more conventional lines; and, unafraid to take risks, they produced such blockbusters in the 1970's as Star Wars, Jaws, The Godfather, I and II, and other commercially and critically successful movies. Coppola is treated fictionally in George Ballak's Come Jericho (1981). In it, he appears as Hollywood director Michael De Luca, a driven man who is shooting in the Mexican jungle a twenty-million-dollar Vietnam epic titled Operation Jericho, which resembles Apocalypse Now. Like Coppola, the fictional De Luca suffers numerous setbacks in the filming, has personal problems, and wrestles with finding an ending for the spectacular film.

Some of the young, inventive filmmakers were women like Joan Micklin Silver, director of Hester Street (1974). Over the years, women had worked in significant numbers in the

film studios as screenwriters (Anita Loos), editors (Dede Allen), and costume designers (Edith Head) and in smaller numbers as producers (Madeline Brandeis) and directors (Frances Marion, at least occasionally). But aside from occasional portrayals of women screenwriters, such as Kit Sargent in What Makes Sammy Run? (1941), women, other than the omnipresent actresses and starlets, get little attention as filmmakers in Hollywood Novels.

This pattern began to change somewhat in the 1970's in keeping with the rise of feminism in our culture. In Larry McMurtry's Somebody's Darling (1978), we follow the exploits of a thirty-seven-year-old female filmmaker who wins acclaim for a modest early film and goes on to more professional films and a more disrupted life. Sandra Hochman's satirical and somewhat farcical Happiness is Too Much Trouble (1976) portrays a heroine selected as a "token woman" to head the world's largest film studio.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, there was a significant movement in film novels away from the counter-culture subject matter of the late 1960's and early 1970's and away from the trend of treating filmmaking only tangentially and back toward the treatment of Hollywood and picture-making per se as subjects. Along with this came a return to more standard plots. This phenomenon may echo the public's return to more conservative and traditional values and may reflect, although several years behind the fact, a wide-spread nostalgia for a simpler time. It may also accompany an historical

interest in the early days of Hollywood that came with distance from that era.

The novels of this period are largely historical. For example, Robert Ackworth's The Takers (1978) traces a film studio's rise to power from 1922. Ann Pinchot, in Vanessa (1978), describes the early film careers of people closely resembling Dorothy and Lilian Gish and pioneer director D.W. Griffith, for whom they worked. In Garson Kanin's Moviola, a ninety-two year old film tycoon narrates to a sympathetic young agent sent to buy the studio a history of Hollywood that is part fact and part fiction. His personal observations bring a new perspective to Hollywood legends and myths, like the romance of Greta Garbo and John Gilbert, the trials of Fatty Arbuckle, the selection of an actress to play Scarlet O'Hara, and the personal traumas of Marilyn Monroe. John Baxter's The Kid (1981) describes early filmmaking and the career of Charlie Chaplin, who is given the fictional name "Tommy Timpson." Several novels, like Bill Mahan's The Boy Who Looked Like Shirley Temple (1980), recall Hollywood's "golden age" of the 1930's and 1940's.

Also at this time a rebirth of interest came about in Hollywood of the 1950's, particularly in the effects of McCarthyism and blacklisting, one of the more unhappy chapters in Hollywood's history. Several earlier novels had treated the problem. Two were written in 1951, at the height of the red scare persecutions. In Richard Brooks's The Producer, the subject figures peripherally; but it is an

essential plot element in James Hilton's Morning Journey. Noel Langley's Hocus Pocus (1952), although not about McCarthyism, is dedicated to "the boys on the Black List . . . who called their souls their own."<sup>12</sup> Then there is a lapse of ten years before the subject comes up again in Patrick Dennis's Genius (1962), in which a minor character who had been blacklisted later becomes an arch conservative.

Nearly ten years elapsed before blacklisting reappeared as a subject, this time in Anne Edwards's Shadow of a Lion (1971). Others followed: Arthur Laurents's The Way We Were (1972), Andrew Bergman's Hollywood and Levine (1975), Zelda Popkin's "Dear Once" (1975), Jill Robinson's Perdido (1978), Doris Schwerin's Leanna: A Novel In Six Movements (1978), Edwin Corley's Long Shots (1981), and Richard Friedel's The Movie Lover (1981).

With the renewed interest on the parts of novelists in historical Hollywood events, it was inevitable that stories in the roman à clef tradition would be produced. From the earliest times, the names of the famous had been used in Hollywood Novels; this is to be expected in fiction about a medium controlled by publicity and consumed by a public hungry for the private details of famous lives. But, in the early novels, such as Tamar Lane's Hey Diddle Diddle (1931), a fictional account of how personalities are marketed and

<sup>12</sup>Noel Langley, Hocus Pocus (London: Methuen, 1952), p. iii.



reputations in Hollywood made or broken, or Jack Preston's Screen Star (1932), which even provides an index of celebrities mentioned in the novel, the names were used only to lend a certain authenticity to the fictional accounts.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, historical distance provided safety for writers who could now even portray celebrities under their own names as characters directly involved in the action of the Hollywood Novels. Novels such as Garson Kanin's Moviola (1979), where the famous act out their own stories, were no longer simply in the roman à clef tradition but were living history. Bob Thomas had done this as early as 1972 with William Randolph Hearst in Weekend '33, and Hearst appeared again in Edwin Corley's Shadows (1975). Humphrey Bogart assists the detective protagonist in a final shoot-out in Andrew Bergman's Hollywood and Levine (1975).

It was, however, film scholar and novelist Stuart M. Kaminsky who perfected the approach in the Toby Peters private eye series: Bullet For a Star (1977), Murder on the Yellow Brick Road (1978), The Howard Hughes Affair (1979), You Bet Your Life (1979), Never Cross a Vampire (1980), and High Midnight (1981). Judy Garland, Chico Marx, Bella Lugosi, Gary Cooper, William Faulkner (in Hollywood to write screenplays), and others seek help from Toby and he is, in turn, assisted by Raymond Chandler, Babe Ruth, and Ernest Hemingway, among other hero celebrities.

And with these novels, it is possible to see a final blurring of the line between the real and the unreal that

long ago had been obliterated by the films that the Hollywood Novels were about. Perhaps it is that obliteration, that lack of distinction between illusion and reality that has given films and, at the same time, Hollywood Novels their appeal. The question of why the myriad novels about Hollywood and film have been so plentiful and so popular is still fraught with speculation about the enormous attraction film had and continues to have.

Although the technical aspects of motion pictures have their roots in the nineteenth century, the medium is very much a twentieth-century phenomenon, with wide-ranging implications. With the exception of television, no medium has had such an impact on the human psyche. Even in its infancy, in such forms as the persistence of motion "toys" and, later, the nickelodeons, the cinema captivated the imagination with its methods and possibilities and the movie-going public became addicted to it in its perfected form. Today, it still endures the onslaught of refined network and cable television and video technology and remains popular.

People have always absorbed films and, virtually, lived them. It is perhaps impossible to measure the impact of Hollywood films on fashions, fads, hair styles, ways of speaking and behaving, trends in music, etc., although sociologists and film historians alike are now seeking to understand such matters. Movies, like their counterpart television, have been an incredibly powerful socializing factor in our culture; they have taught us values, mores, customs, and

have set traditions.

Because our serious and popular literatures alike hold up mirrors to our preoccupations and concerns, it is small wonder that films, and eventually, a specific geographical place where films are made--Hollywood--found their ways into our prose forms, both fiction and non-fiction (serious criticism, film history, and even gossip and fan magazines). The next two chapters will trace the history and character of the Hollywood Novel in order to determine what the genre has reflected and is continuing to reflect about Hollywood and filmmaking.

## Chapter 2

### The Containing Locale: The Hollywood Novel and Its Sub-genres, 1916--1963

Carolyn See's dissertation, "The Hollywood Novel: An Historical and Critical Study" (University of California, Los Angeles, 1963), traces comprehensively the literary nature of the Hollywood Novel genre as it had developed through 1963. As a critical achievement, the study stood alone at the time it was written. Simply in terms of the lengthy bibliography, part of which she credits to the Los Angeles County Library, her study is still an invaluable tool; and her general critical insights are, for the most part, persuasive and enlightening.

See's study, however, is not without flaws. The bibliography contains some incorrect names, titles, and dates. It also includes many entries, perhaps as many as fifty, which are not Hollywood Novels per se. Jeanne Davis's The Dry Place (1960) and Robert James Cosgriff's Wastelands (1928), for examples, are novels set in the California desert and northern California, respectively. She also includes about fifty novels set only partially and very insignificantly in Hollywood. These include, among others, Edward Harris Heth's We Are the Robbers (1947), Vina Delmar's About Mrs. Leslie (1950), and Jean Leslie's Intimate Journal of Warren Winslow

(1952).

Still, the work is thoughtful, thorough, stimulating, and, in the main, highly reliable. And I believe that in critiquing her appraisal of the genre and in reshaping it with my own conclusions, I can reach a comprehensive definition of the Hollywood Novel through 1963 in this chapter and present an update of her study through 1981 in the following chapter.

See's dissertation is in two parts. The first briefly traces the genre historically from 1915 to 1962 and serves as what she terms an "ethnography" in that it reconstructs Hollywood life (with See acting as cultural anthropologist) from evidence in the novels. This section also treats sub-genres of the Hollywood Novel, including historical, detective, comic-epistolary, and semi-pornographic novels. The second part consists of five essays on a series of themes which she sees at work in Hollywood Novels: "Conventions of Artificiality," "The Failure of Sexuality," "Art, Craft, and Money," "Illusions of Time and Place," and "Goofy Unreality." This latter essay takes as its title Edmund Wilson's term from The Boys in the Back Room (1941) for the southern California environment; this chapter is in essence a rebuttal of Wilson's contention that life on the Pacific coast is not a fit subject for serious literature.

Early in her introduction, See defines a Hollywood Novel as "one which is set in the film capital, and has at least one major character or several minor ones working in show

business; or as any novel of the American film industry anywhere on location, as long as the action of the book focuses on movie-making and the lives of movie people."<sup>1</sup>

For her, researching and writing in the early 1960's, this was a workable definition which presented few problems. The most recent book listed in her bibliography was published in 1963 during the transitional period between studio-controlled filmmaking and wide-spread picture-making by independent and foreign companies in the United States and abroad. See experienced few of the definitional problems that must be wrestled with in describing the novels about film of the past twenty years, a task which will be undertaken in the third chapter of this study.

To understand See's definition of the genre more completely it is necessary to examine the novels' setting. The actual town of Hollywood lies along the northern hills of the larger city of Los Angeles with La Brea Boulevard, Gower Street, Melrose Avenue, and the hills above Hollywood Boulevard as physical boundaries.<sup>2</sup> It had come into existence in 1894 when Horace Henderson Wilcox, an ardent prohibitionist from Kansas bought 120 acres near Los Angeles; his wife named

<sup>1</sup>Carolyn See, "The Hollywood Novel: An Historical and Critical Study," Diss. Univ. of California, Los Angeles 1963, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>David M. Fine, "Landscape of Fantasy: Nathanael West and Los Angeles Architecture of the Thirties," in Essays on California Writers, ed. Charles L. Crow (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Univ. Press, 1977), p. 61.

the lush and productive area, which had been reclaimed from the desert, "Hollywood." A drought in 1910 forced the town to become a suburb of the larger city in order to receive water, but at that time the two locations were connected only by an eight-mile dirt road.<sup>3</sup>

Filmmakers arrived in Los Angeles as early as 1906 with the establishment of the American Biograph and Mutoscope Company; but the infiltration of Hollywood did not begin until 1911 when the Centaur company opened its western branch, Nestor, in a run-down roadhouse on an unpaved Sunset Boulevard (today the site of the Columbia Broadcasting System). Within months, fifteen film companies were established in this area.<sup>4</sup> By 1919, eighty percent of all moving pictures made anywhere in the world were being produced there.<sup>5</sup> And until the 1950's, when the studio system began to collapse, Hollywood reigned supreme in the international film industry.

Hollywood, now an area within Los Angeles, seems in the novels to be a composite of a number of icons which are associated with the Los Angeles/Hollywood environs: the Brown Derby, the Hollywood Bowl, Mulholland Drive, Grauman's Chinese Theatre, the Hollywoodland sign, Sunset Boulevard,

<sup>3</sup>Kevin Brownlow, The Parade's Gone By . . . . (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Brownlow, p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Brownlow, p. 34.

the Trocadero nightclub, Rodeo Drive, Beverly Hills, Gower Gulch, the studio backlots, Hollywood Boulevard, etc. But the name "Hollywood" carries wide-ranging connotations of a life style of glamour, fame, and money, connotations inextricably tied up with the town's primary industry--motion pictures, a medium in which reality and illusion are inseparable.

Even the reality of the physical town is an illusion in a sense because, as film historian Kevin Brownlow points out, "When you arrive in Hollywood itself, you are still miles away from several major Hollywood studios and six miles from the homes of the stars in Beverly Hills."<sup>6</sup> To speak of Hollywood, says Brownlow, is in actuality to speak of Los Angeles, Glendale, Burbank (where television filming is now concentrated), Culver City, Malibu, and Santa Monica; he believes that "Hollywood" is a "generic term as well as a specific place."<sup>7</sup>

I think it is this "generic" Hollywood that led Carolyn See to violate the boundaries of her own definition of Hollywood Novels (those set in Hollywood or on location and involving filmmaking or people in films) when she compiled her bibliography. In annotating her entries, I discovered a great number of novels that were set in the general Los Angeles area or even just merely in southern California.

<sup>6</sup>Brownlow, p. 38.

<sup>7</sup>Brownlow, p. 39.



For example, See cites Lee Thayer's murder mystery Guilty! (1940), which dwells on the disappearance of a Los Angeles ventriloquist's wife; nothing about the film industry is included. She also cites Aldous Huxley's Ape and Essence (1948), possibly because the novel, an account of life in Los Angeles in 2108 after WWII, is cast in the form of a rejected movie scenario but even more likely because famous Los Angeles landmarks and icons--those of the generic Hollywood--figure in the story. Silver Doll (1952) by Blair Treynor is a crime drama about the slot-machine industry and its influence on Los Angeles politics. Mary MacLaren's The Twisted Heart (1952) has no movie people as characters and in no way is about filmmaking. It is simply set in Los Angeles. The fact that in her foreward MacLaren credits James M. Cain for editing the book may have influenced See to include it. Cain's novels are also set in the Los Angeles area and often are discussed critically in conjunction with Hollywood Novels, as in David M. Fine's essay "Landscape of Fantasy: Nathanael West and Los Angeles Architecture of the Thirties," although only one--Serenade (1937)--has to do with filmmaking in any way.

See and others sometimes seem unable to distinguish between the Hollywood Novel, as she herself defines it, and the general Los Angeles novel, another sub-genre of southern California fiction that is characterized, in part, by "hard-boiled" prose like that of Cain and the "tough guy" mysteries of Raymond Chandler, Ross Macdonald, and other private eye

and detective writers. See lists as Hollywood Novels Chandler's The Big Sleep (1939), The Lady in the Lake (1943), The Little Sister (1949), and The Long Goodbye (1953). In actuality, only The Little Sister may be considered a Hollywood Novel; in it, Philip Marlowe searches for the lost brother of a young woman who hopes, unbeknownst to Marlowe, to share blackmail money he has extorted from their older sister, a Hollywood movie actress.

Likewise, See lists Ross Macdonald's The Barbarous Coast (1956), The Drowning Pool (1958), and The Ferguson Affair (1960). Only the first, in which private eye Lew Archer's detection trail leads to the murky goings-on in the inner sanctum of a movie studio, can in any way be classified as a Hollywood Novel. In 1967, Alfred A. Knopf publishers made a similar error--most likely deliberately in order to capitalize on the commercial value of the anthology's title--when they collected this novel with two Los Angeles (but non-Hollywood) novels by Macdonald, The Moving Target (1949) and The Way Some People Die (1951), under the title, Archer in Hollywood.

Having as subject matter things associated with Los Angeles was often apparently enough for See to qualify certain books as Hollywood Novels. For example, Prisoner in Paradise (1954) concerns a framed man who, when freed from prison, practices medicine in a Los Angeles "Healthopathy" clinic that uses techniques similar to those of homeopathy while exposing a number of shams and cultists of the type

that have always flourished in Los Angeles. But films or filmmaking never figure in. The author, Garet Rogers, once, however, ran for the mayoralty of Los Angeles and is, thus, intimately associated with the city. Lewis Browne's See What I Mean? The Confessions of Clem Smullett (1943) is based on an actual anti-Semitic organization based in Los Angeles in the 1930's and financed, in part, by Nazi money; yet the film industry is absent from the plot.

The point is, novels frequently evoke rich and varied associations with southern California, Los Angeles, and the Hollywood area that are difficult to untangle. It is easy and tempting to lump all novels treating these matters together as one literary tradition. While in a general way they are, it is important to see the sub-genres, such as the Hollywood Novel, at work in southern California literature. The Hollywood Novel, by virtue of its characters, icons, and thematic concerns, is quite a separate entity, and, therefore, must be treated separately.

Over time, Hollywood began to be characterized by its surreal environment and highly charged sexual climate, by the indefinable aura that clings to the city and the "goofy unreality" that See discusses and that I will update in the next chapter. It is this Hollywood that readers expect to find in novels about the film capital and it tempts some authors to set their stories there when, in fact, they might take place almost anywhere else. A prime example is Marguerite Nelson's Hollywood Nurse (1963), a story about a

young Cherry Ames type nurse who must choose between positions at a small town general hospital and a fancy Hollywood medical center. Her story might've been set anywhere; its only head-nod to Hollywood is the presence at the medical center of a curmudgeonly old film star who takes a shine to her. The name "Hollywood" in the title allows the author to capitalize on the reader's assumptions about and associations with the Hollywood of lore and to draw that reader into a novel whose components are virtually interchangeable with hundreds of other nurse novels. There are many of these sorts of novels, depending for their existence on the reader's desire to connect in some way with Hollywood. But this study will concentrate, as did See's in the main, on novels which meet the requirements set forth in her initial definition.

Following a somewhat abbreviated historical overview, See continues her extended definition of the genre with a description of "the all-purpose-plot":

An all-purpose-plot serves for about eighty per cent of these books: a young hero or heroine comes west to work in the movies, has a series of adventures, which are resolved by the protagonist either staying in Hollywood as a success or failure, or going home. The "adventures" are numerous but fall into several general categories. The protagonist will learn something about money and fame in the movies or the lack of it; but as he learns these things he will fill his time with specific activities, all astonishingly similar, both from novel to novel

and within any given book.<sup>8</sup>

She goes on to discuss the protagonist's trip west to Hollywood as a rite de passage, the Hollywood that awaits the newcomer, the role of the apartment house in establishing this character in a new set of economic, personal, and sociological relationships, and the protagonist's attendance at or involvement in parties, premières, suicides, and funerals. In addition, she singles out Jewish characters in the novels, mostly in the form of studio moguls, and shows why they are a stable force in the Hollywood of fiction and how they cannot or need not participate in the transient life style of the typical protagonist.

While it is undeniable that there are many Hollywood Novels which fit See's description, her figures are questionable. Her bibliography contains 513 entries which she designates as Hollywood Novels or novels set, in part, in Hollywood. Her annotations, when they appear, are brief and in the form of phrases that usually use only the titles of the five essays in her dissertation: "failure of sexuality," "goofy unreality," "conventions of artificiality," etc. They indicate nothing about plots.

When I set about to read and fully annotate the books on See's list, I began to see that her contentions were inaccurate. I found that 103 of the novels were either unlocatable and had not been synopsized in reference tools such as Book

<sup>8</sup>See, p. 56.

Review Digest or reviewed in such places as New York Times Book Review, New York Herald Tribune, or Library Journal, or they were simply not Hollywood Novels in any sense of the definition and could be eliminated from the bibliography.

In examining the 410 remaining novels, I discovered that there were 14 unlocatable books for which I had reviews but about which it was impossible, based on those reviews, to determine whether or not they fit her description. Forty of the books could not be considered because they were set on location somewhere outside of Hollywood, in the United States or abroad, and featured no characters journeying to Hollywood. Twenty-one more fit her description only partially; forty-three fit it exactly. But, 292 other novels--well over half--had no young characters arriving in Hollywood, living in an apartment house, and learning something about money, fame, sex, art, craft, etc. in the film world.

The novels See uses as evidence indisputably comply with her description: the Graham brothers' Queer People (1930), Stella George Perry's Extra-Girl (1929), Donald Henderson Clarke's Alabam! (1934), Beatrice Burton's The Hollywood Girl (1927), Horace McCoy's I Should've Stayed Home (1938) and They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1935), Nathanael West's The Day of the Locust (1939), etc. And I could supplement her examples with others of my own: Dixie Willson's Hollywood Starlet (1942), David Niven's Once Over Lightly (1951), William Saroyan's Rock Wagram (1951), H. Allen Smith's Mister Zip (1952), Stuart Palmer's Cold Poison (1954), Alfred

Coppel's Night of Fire and Snow (1957), and Alan Marcus's Of Streets and Stars (1960). But their numbers are small in comparison to the Hollywood Novels about other sorts of characters and situations.

Many of the novels seem to correspond broadly to her specifics in some ways, particularly in regards to a character who travels to Hollywood for some particular reason and succeeds or fails. For example, in P. G. Wodehouse's Laughing Gas (1936), Reginald, Earl of Havershot, goes to Hollywood to rescue his cousin from a designing woman; the standard comic Wodehouse fare of zany characters and mistaken identities abounds. In Clyde B. Clason's The Whispering Ear (1938), Professor Theocritus Lucius Westborough, an expert on Roman history and a criminologist, arrives in Hollywood to be an advisor on a film about Cleopatra but gets sidetracked by a murder mystery. In Lee Shippey's If We Only Had Money (1939), a writer for pulp western magazines is brought to Hollywood by a studio to write "authentic" westerns (about which he knows nothing). Hired as a technical advisor by a studio making a picture about Lizzie Bordon, New York-based Hildegard Withers also solves a murder in Stuart Palmer's The Puzzle of the Happy Hooligan (1941). Although these novels, and others like them, involve some person journeying to Hollywood and making certain discoveries about life in the film capital, they are not about struggling young actors and actresses and do not meet See's other requirements.

It is easy to understand why See became entrapped in her

inaccurate description (in that it doesn't apply to large numbers of the novels). Hollywood parties, splashy premières, elaborate funerals, suicides by disappointed would-be Hollywood aspirants, and Jewish moguls are common elements and, in fact, may be regarded as plot elements or icons in nearly all Hollywood Novels, including those which are not about a young, struggling protagonist. But not all characters are seeking fame; some have already found it, others don't want it. The protagonists in the myriad detective Hollywood Novels make discoveries which uncover for the reader certain things about Hollywood's version of fame, sex, money, and art; but these are not usually revelations to the sleuth. See's definition implies that success or failure is tied in with fame-seeking; in fact, only 42 of the novels she cites have this as their plot. The narrowness of the definition excludes not only most detective novels but also the large numbers of historical novels. It also excludes novels whose characters are somehow involved with the film industry but who are embarked in that particular novel on some adventure outside Hollywood. It also eliminates novels in which Hollywood characters are examined because of personal ambitions, problems, or needs that are unrelated to filmmaking.

Nevertheless, one of her definitional stipulations, the journey to Hollywood, is a standard plot element. That is because traveling to Hollywood is in fact what happened in real life and, within the fiction therefore, is what is needed to set the plot in motion. Los Angeles and Hollywood



have traditionally been, up until perhaps the last generation at least, places where no one was from and where there were few natives. Angelenos often joke about how there are in their city 10,000 Iowans for every 1,000 natives. Hollywood the film capital was created by immigrants from the eastern film industries and, later, in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's, partially sustained by those from the cinemas of Germany, England, and other countries. It is, in a sense, a fabricated, manufactured place not created specifically as a stable residential area but as place existing for one purpose only: the creation of films. The very nature of its primary business is ephemeral and the fames and fortunes of those involved in the industry are fleeting; there is an axiom there that "you are only as good as your last picture." Actors, directors, producers, writers, and extras, therefore, come and go. The population of the city is virtually transient. For every failure in Hollywood, there is another fresh replacement journeying there from some other part of the country in hopes of success.

The journey is an important element in See's definition of the Hollywood Novel, but it may be better to view that journey in a broader sense, as a quest, as an archetype which audiences respond to and which may, in part, account for the popularity of the genre among writers as well as readers.

The Hollywood Novels which fit precisely See's narrow "all-purpose-plot" may be a variation of Northrop Frye's mythos of romance, a myth in which the adventure that ensues

as the hero pursues a quest is the key element. According to Frye, the quest has three main stages: "The stage of the perilous journey and the preliminary minor adventures; the crucial struggle, usually some kind of battle in which either the hero or his foe, or both, must die; and the exaltation of the hero."<sup>9</sup>

The first stage is the protagonist's often lengthy journey (usually by train) to the film capital, during which he or she frequently meets other aspirants, learns about Hollywood, and severs, sometimes with great pain, the ties to home, stability, and old values. The second stage is the struggle to find a place in movieland as a film star, a powerful mogul, a successful screenwriter, a set designer, etc. During this struggle, the protagonist may be completely defeated (in which case he may return home, give himself up to drugs or crime, or even commit suicide) or only be partially defeated (in which case he may find success, but not without great personal sacrifice, or he may be corrupted and tainted by the Hollywood environment). On rare occasions, he or she may defeat the foe--the seemingly invincible Hollywood system which offers fame and money to a very select few. Almost always, however, even when characters appear to triumph, they are seldom exalted; many, like Sammy Glick of Budd Schulberg's What Makes Sammy Run? (1941) and Daisy of

<sup>9</sup>Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), p. 186.

Gavin Lambert's Inside Daisy Clover (1963), find that winning is in actuality losing and success is failure. So, in a certain sense, the quest myth turns tragic or ironic.

In her treatment of the sub-genres within Hollywood Novels, See is somewhat more reliable than in her "all-purpose-plot" description. She contends that because Hollywood is a "popularized microcosm of America and American expectations," it "lends itself with facility as a background to most varieties of this country's popular literature."<sup>10</sup> She views as "pure" Hollywood Novels those which fit within her parameters for the "all-purpose-plot." (I have shown how few these are and prefer to use the term "'pure' Hollywood Novel" to distinguish novels set in Hollywood from those set in international film industries.) In addition, she cites novels which take the motion picture business as their setting, but which use also other popular literary traditions and says, "The fictional machinery generally associated with the film capital may be trotted out in conjunction with almost any other high-selling, easy-to-understand fictional mode."<sup>11</sup> She cites, in particular, historical, semi-pornographic, comic epistolary, and detective novels. Because each has a specific narrowness of vision and a certain set of audience expectations associated with it, each portrays Hollywood in a unique context.

<sup>10</sup>See, p. 103.

<sup>11</sup>See, p. 103.

She bases her assumptions about historical novels on five books: James Pollak's The Golden Egg (1946), Robert Carson's The Magic Lantern (1952), Harold Robbins's The Dream Merchants (1949) and The Carpetbaggers (1961), and Jesse Lasky, Jr.'s Naked in a Cactus Garden (1961). All these novels, which she notes do not depend on scholarship or documentation but which simply chronologically arrange a series of legends, stereotypes, anecdotes, and cameos, trace the development of particular film dynasties and the histories of the families that founded them through the 1910's, 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's.

The nature of the historical novel is to trace certain elements--characters, institutions, etc.--over the course of time. But it is difficult to find elements which will remain in place through time in the ever-changing, unstable Hollywood climate. Only one group of people out of all the motley Hollywood types--both fictional and real--seems stable: the film studio moguls, most of whom are Jewish, and their families. Their stability in the Hollywood environment is insured by a number of things: the close-knit family structure and the loyalty of family members, which grow out of and are sustained by their strong religious faith and traditions; the money they have accumulated from decades of wise investment and, sometimes, penurious attitudes; and their great power, built up through years of studio administration. They contrast vividly with the struggling and poor young gentile aspirants who cut themselves loose from family, values, and

traditions when they choose to come to the film capital and are cast adrift, usually alone, in the choppy seas of Hollywood.

The plots for the historical novels, such as the five See cites, are interchangeable. Those in the first generation of the family are foreign-born or merchant sons of immigrants in the east who invest money in nickelodeons and other aspects of filmmaking until they are forced to flee the Motion Picture Patents Company's grip and move to California. Once there, they use their capital to establish film studios and, eventually, swindle the remaining east coast branch of the business. The wives maintain Jewish customs and hold the family together while the men take mistresses, double-cross their friends, wheel and deal, and become omnipotent, mysterious beings. The sons inherit the studio dynasties and either carry on their father's roles (The Dream Merchants, The Carpetbaggers, The Magic Lantern), fail miserably and destroy the family's business (The Golden Egg), or evolve their own standards by rejecting the values of their fathers and the dynasty (Naked in a Cactus Garden).<sup>12</sup>

See notes the inverted priority of stereotypes in these novels. The stars or performers, with whom Hollywood glamour and fame are associated, are naturally of interest to the audience; but, because of the moguls' relative stability in Hollywood, the novels must necessarily be about them, the

<sup>12</sup>See, p. 108.

strictly business-oriented, uneducated, insensitive, foreign-seeming, domestically-entangled studio heads.<sup>13</sup> So the writing of these historical novels is extremely demanding unless the authors ignore historical fact (a difficult thing to do because the Jewish moguls did exist) or give up stereotypes (an undesirable course of action in popular fiction writing, especially in novels about Hollywood). The problem is resolved by the inclusion of a broad spectrum of Hollywood life to ensure the reader receives the quotient of glamour he expects from a Hollywood Novel and to create sensation, in part, by over-exaggerating the already existing stereotypes of the moguls and their families. It may be because this technique thrusts the obvious Jewishness of the magnates into the novels' spotlights that Virgil Lokke has identified anti-Semitism as one of the main characteristics of the genre.<sup>14</sup>

There are other historical novels which See omits from her discussion. George and Lilian Chester's On the Lot and Off (1924) traces Izzy Iskovitz, an energetic young Jewish boy who uses the money of his father and seven uncles to rise to power as a Hollywood producer; he seals his triumph with marriage to the daughter of powerful mogul Meyer Guldengeld, thereby merging the two dynasties (a feat not unlike David Selznick's marriage to Louis B. Mayer's daughter). Shepherd

<sup>13</sup>See, pp. 105-06.

<sup>14</sup>Virgil L. Lokke, "The Literary Image of Hollywood," Diss. State Univ. of Iowa 1955, pp. 22-29.

Traube's Glory Road (1935) chronicles Karl Lustig, a German-born Jew and an ambitious daydreamer, as he comes to America in 1894 and, through hard work and perserverance, carves out a place for himself as a film executive. Hershele Korbelnik, in Leon Zolotkoff's From Vilna to Hollywood (1932), is depicted beginning with his emigration from Russia to the United States (where he becomes "Harry Corbell"), through distinguished service in the army, to his ownership of a successful Hollywood movie studio. Unfortunately, he is destroyed by an incident that occurred in Russia years before.

In Noel Clad's Love and Money (1959), the growing Hollywood film industry of the 1920's and 1930's is characterized by a Samuel Goldwyn type producer, Anton Semoyan. Through the memories and flashbacks of studio head Nicholas Sonnenberg in Richard G. Hubler's The Shattering of the Image (1959), the very earliest days of Hollywood are set forth and seen as beautifully simple when compared to the garishness of his contemporary world. Sonnenberg is beset by problems typical of his time: the expiring contract of his most bankable star, criticism for the slipping quality of his studio's films, the encroaching threat of television, and money problems in general. His story traces fictionally the histories of the numerous real life moguls who got their starts in early Hollywood days and found their power all but gone when the studio system failed in the 1950's and 1960's.

Another novel undiscussed by See, Cedric Belfrage's Promised Land; Notes For a History (first published in 1938

and reprinted in photo-facsimile in 1978), treats the founding and development of Hollywood via a fictional account of a mid-western family who are traced from 1857 through their move to California and their experiences there. Belfrage's historical accuracy is based on the memories and material of people who had lived in the Los Angeles and Hollywood area during the times he writes about. A much less serious book, the satiric Tall Tales From Hollywood (1932) by Tay Garnett, uses chapter titles like "The Infant Crawls," "The Infant Cuts a Baby-Tooth," etc. purportedly to trace the birth and development of the Hollywood film industry. Many of the stories about unnamed and incredibly stupid producers--such as the one concerning the mogul who doesn't want to film The Hunchback of Notre Dame because he believes the public is tired of football pictures--are often noted by other sources as being about Samuel Goldwyn.

At this point, two other novels See overlooks are worthy of note. Neither is, strictly speaking, an historical novel; yet both try to imbue their stories with historical significance through particular gimmicks. Libbie Block's The Hills of Beverly (1957) uses the style of an eighteenth century court diary to parallel the activities of studio head David Staver, his wife, and other Hollywood personages to the power struggles of European royal courts. In her foreward, Block says she drew her style from Queen Marguerite of Navarre, the Countess de Lafayette, the Marquise de Sévigné, the Duke de Saint-Simon, and the Abbé Brantome. Another novel, Henry H.



Rabbes's Hollywood Episode (1946), uses archaic syntax and expressions ("gads!" and "zounds!" etc.), as well as a raft of archaic historical conventions, including a duel, to tell the story of a young woman's attempts, on the advice of Hollywood "Star of Stars," Mayelle Fresche, to make her husband jealous in order to win his love.

In their own ways as distinctive as the historical Hollywood Novels are those Hollywood Novels deemed "semi-pornographic" by See. They fall somewhere between "hard-core" pornography (which she defines by the Supreme Court "prurient interest" specifications) and "literary" pornography (novels like Harold Robbins's The Carpetbaggers [1961]); she sees them as "having neither the smuttiness of the former nor the realism of the latter."<sup>15</sup> They can be sold on newsstands and sent through the mail; most are paperbacks with lurid covers.

In her discussion and/or bibliography, See singles out these semi-pornographic Hollywood Novels (I will list all of them to show a consistency in titles and to reveal the publication dates): Barry Devlin's Song of the Whip (1952), Greg Randolph's Sex Goddess (1962), Stu Rivers's The Casting Couchers (1961), Paul Russo's Stag Starlet (1961), William B. Greene's Hollywood Virgin (1962), Aaron Shirley's Body of a Young Woman (1961), Clayton Matthews's Sex Dancer (1962), Jim Harmon's Celluloid Scandal (1961), Brian Dunn's The Censored Screen (1960), John Carver's The Sex Twist (1962), Arnold

<sup>15</sup>See, p. 126.

Marmor's Sweet Smell of Lust (1962), Tomlin Reed's Call Me Mistress (1948), Mack Reynolds's This Time We Love (1962), Donna Richards's Hollywood Lesbian (1963), John Trinian's House of Evil (1962), and John Turner's Starlet! (1961). She also mentions in the text a novel titled Lens Girl, but it is not cited in the bibliography and no other information about it is available.

In trying to understand why so many semi-pornographic novels are set in Hollywood, See reaches some striking conclusions. The novels have what she terms "a physical and emotional frame of reference"<sup>16</sup> taken from the movies. They also share a number of elements with the film medium: an emphasis on amazing anatomy, in particular, a fascination with breasts; a certain voyeurism; and the presence of bland, sentimental love, disassociated from rationality. The fiction draws upon and contributes to "the myth of Hollywood as being a place different, more unbelievable, more inscrutable than the rest of the country."<sup>17</sup> The unreal and fantastic physiological makeup of the novels' characters requires an unreal environment for them to function in, and Hollywood provides that place. The authors feared prosecution by the law, but they also needed to please "an unlettered audience"; their linguistic patterns, therefore, became "surrealistic" but not "incompatible to a setting which to begin with, may

<sup>16</sup>See, p. 138.

<sup>17</sup>See, p. 138.

be thought of as largely unreal."<sup>18</sup> In a later discussion of "goofy unreality," it will become apparent that this "unreal" environment invites other types of Hollywood Novels as well, fiction that might have been unsuccessful if set anywhere other than in Hollywood.

It should be noted that seventeen of the twenty books See discusses or cites are set in 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1963, suggesting either that such novels began to be written only in that decade (an unlikely assumption and one negated by the two novels--Call Me Mistress and Song of the Whip--which were published earlier) or that See's research was not comprehensive.

In a footnote to the chapter which contains this discussion, See explains that she had been called during that past year--1963--as an "expert witness" for an obscure novel (not a Hollywood Novel) titled Joy Killer that was challenged in court as being pornographic. She compared it to many other novels including, in particular, The Carpetbaggers and discovered it was neither as frank nor sexual as the latter but perhaps less judicious. I believe it is possible to speculate that the inclusion of so many semi-pornographic Hollywood Novels of that specific time period suggests her reading and compiling of titles within this sub-genre, most likely done in preparation for the trial, were somewhat sparse and lopsided in terms of the time span of the whole genre.

<sup>18</sup>See, p. 138.

Also, her list may suggest an unfamiliarity with other semi-pornographic Hollywood Novels. Yet, I am not able to amend her research in this area for several reasons, all of which no doubt hindered her, too. Because of the nature of their subject matter, these novels were not purchased by libraries; they were not reviewed in publications such as Library Journal, Book Review Digest, or Bookman and were not even listed in the National Union Catalog or Cumulative Book Index. I was unable to fill out her uncompleted bibliographical notations for them or to verify their existence. Even if I could in some way obtain titles for other novels, it would be difficult to locate them for reading. Their ephemeral nature would make that nearly impossible. Yet, I infer from the many that See somehow located over a restricted four-year period that there have been dozens of semi-pornographic Hollywood Novels written over the years.

There were three Hollywood Novels, however, excluded from See's discussion although listed in her bibliography (but not deemed semi-pornographic) that I would see as obvious members of the sub-genre. Ann Bell's Lady's Lady (1940) is a picaresque account of heroine Bunny Flower's life, set mostly in the 1930's. The novel mixes incredible violence (particularly in a scene where Bunny's mother is savagely beaten to death) with explicit lesbian and heterosexual (mostly rape) scenes. Bunny, despite her sweetness, charm, and beauty, is the constant victim, from her earliest childhood, of cruel and lecherous men who sexually assault

her; her only solace is in relationships with other women. As a young girl, she longs to be a companion and secretary to a rich woman--a "lady's lady" (this term cuts two ways, suggesting also her homosexual activities)--and she seeks such employment in Hollywood. After a stint as a movie extra during which she is molested by various producers, becomes pregnant, has an abortion, and gets involved in a legal case which makes her notorious, she goes on to further sexual misadventures in New York and Hawaii, never losing her Candide-like innocence and victim status. This novel, which complies with all of See's generalizations about semi-pornographic novels set in Hollywood, was published by House of Field and printed on baby blue paper, perhaps to suggest the "blueness" of the story. Because its situations and language are considerably more explicit than those normally found in novels of its period, I believe that it was printed in a limited edition and circulated outside of regular libraries.

Another, earlier novel, Haynes Lubou's Reckless Hollywood (1932), also depends on the sexual implications associated with Hollywood, as well as the unreal environment where anything may happen. Featured is Broadway chorus girl Petty Love; this name and the name of the publisher--Amour Press--suggest a satirical tone, but this is not sustained by the rest of the novel which comes off as quite serious and straightforward. After failing to break into Hollywood films, Petty loses her virginity to and gives up her stable job at a fan magazine for a movie stunt flyer and would-be

novelist. But their relationship deteriorates into a non-stop drunken battle and sexathon as they shuttle between New York and Hollywood. Several things about this book make it seem ahead of its time: its general pessimism, the unsatisfying and unsettling ending which resolves nothing about the relationship, the explicit sexual situations, the frank language, and the open treatment of homosexuality. "Haynes Lubou" is a pseudonym, and I was unable to find the author's real name. Nonetheless, I'm inferring that the novel was penned by someone intimately familiar with the Hollywood scene and with literature about Hollywood because the Graham brothers' Hollywood Novel, Queer People (1930), is mentioned by one of the characters and because a prefatory note explains that many of the "fictional" characters will be recognizable to those knowledgeable about Hollywood of the 1920's and early 1930's.

These two novels were published in hardback. A third novel, W.E. Butterworth's Comfort Me With Love (1960)--another ephemeral paperback of the early 1960's--is similar in many ways to the semi-pornographic novels See discusses, although she deems it not semi-pornographic but rather designates it only as showing "the failure of sexuality," another of her classifications. It seems to me, however, to capitalize on Hollywood sexual associations and, in particular, to be extremely voyeuristic in a cinematic way, while mixing sexual and racial matters in an effort, perhaps, to be even more provocative. In it, Hollywood personality Jeremy Kerr,

a southerner with rigid sexual mores, wrestles with his attraction to an amoral starlet who has been sexually involved not only with several of his friends but also with a Negro; in fact, she has made a pronographic film of herself and the black man which all of Jeremy's friends have seen. He breaks off their relationship; but after giving in sexually to a "moral" society woman and being seduced in a most unpleasant way by the highly respected wife of a friend in the South, he returns to the starlet, who now seems almost "decent" by contrast.

Although it is impossible, because of factors stated above, to catalogue all semi-pornographic, or for that matter pornographic, Hollywood Novels, it should be clear from the few discussed here that they have been a constant, though for obvious reasons not very visible, factor in the genre. After 1964, particularly in the 1970's and beyond, the terms "semi-pornographic" and "pornographic" in relation to Hollywood Novels became meaningless, as a later chapter will show.

A third sub-genre of Hollywood Novels that See designates is the comic-epistolary novel. Although the epistolary novel, in which the story is carried forward by letters from one or more characters, has been a viable narrative form at least since Samuel Richardson's Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded, in 1740, See traces the comic American variety of the form to Edward Streeter's Dere Mabel (1917). This was a series of letters, supposedly written from WWI training camps and battlefields by a nearly illiterate soldier to his hometown

sweetheart, letters which were full of his personal observations on the war and those around him. According to See, this comic letter format, depending on misspellings and grammatical incorrectness for humor, became extremely widely written. Thus, it was only to be expected that the Hollywood Novel, so influenced by trends in popular literature, would intersect with it. It may have been used by authors of Hollywood Novels to showcase a rather simple-minded central character whose reports describe Hollywood from a naive perspective and, thereby, create irony and humor.

See cites four novels in the comic-epistolary sub-genre. One of the earliest was Al Martin's Dog Gone Hollywood (1930) in which a twist is added; the epistles are from a dog who has been taken to Hollywood by his owner and who makes observations about life in the film capital and, especially, about the dogs of the famous. A second, Richard Henry Lee's Nights and Daze in Hollywood (1934), is comprised of letters from Fanny Dopass (See notes that the novel "may be viewed as a kind of linguistic fugue of jokes about the human posterior"<sup>19</sup>), a very stupid factory worker who inherits a great fortune and travels to the film capital where she is unwittingly swindled by gigolos and phony professors, kidnapped without even knowing it, and put upon in every possible way. All is duly and cheerfully reported in her letters. In Lynton Wright Brent's Gittin' in the Movies; Adventures of a

<sup>19</sup>See, p. 142.



Country Boy in Hollywood; Pitchers by the Author (1936), hillbilly Lem G. Whillikins succeeds in Hollywood, in spite of himself, and reports his successes in malapropistic, illiterate letters to his "Paw."

There is little audience identification with these three letter writers; their outrageousness provokes only laughter and a certain feeling of superiority in the reader. Another comic-epistolary novel cited by See, however, uses a correspondent or narrator whose plight is very real and who has several dimensions beyond the flat surface of the other three protagonists. This is Anita Loos's A Mouse is Born (1951) in which Hollywood star Effie Huntriss (known as "The Bust"), who has been confined to bed to await the arrival of a baby, pens a long letter to the unborn child ("the mouse") which attempts to explain her own career and the facts of life and sex (the "Great Mystery"). Her attempts are laughable because her grade school education handicaps her spelling and diction, thereby creating an unusual patois; but she is nonetheless sincere and likeable, and we identify with her in her victimization by former lovers, the husband who fathered the baby, and her fellow screen stars. Ultimately, the satire is not at her expense, as it had been with the other letter writers, but is at Hollywood's. Her eventual triumph over the system is extremely gratifying to the reader.

Another comic-epistolary novel, overlooked by See in her discussion, is Anne Taylor and Fern Mosk's Press on Regardless; or, The Confessions of a Sports Car Addict (1956).

Here, in a series of letters from Hollywood home to Dimsal [sic], Massachusetts, sports car enthusiast Prudence Trumbull narrates her adventures as a car salesperson after being fired from her job as first assistant to movie costume designer Enid Foot. In this novel, unlike the others, the letters are correctly spelled and literately written. Their supposed humor comes from the somewhat overly-antic, bordering on cloyingly cute behavior of "Pru" and the eccentricities she reports of her customers, such as film producer "Mr. Cahier," who uses his Oscar statuette for the Best Picture Award as a hood ornament.

It is interesting to note that the first English epistolary novel--Richardson's Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded--is the model for Upton Sinclair's Another Pamela; or, Virtue Still Rewarded . . . (1941). The modern Pamela, a devout Seventh Day Adventist, works as a maid for a wealthy Los Angeles family. Sensing her virtue and decency, the family urges her to be a good influence on their immoral nephew, whom she, still chaste after several close calls, eventually marries. Although this is not a Hollywood Novel per se, perhaps See includes it in her bibliography (but not discussion) because the letters give impressions of Los Angeles and more fleeting ones of Hollywood and descriptions of Pamela's seeing her first movies. She also tells of meeting, as might be expected in a Sinclair novel, with Eugene Debs and other social activists.

Closely akin to the epistolary novels are those com-

prised of diary or journal entries, a form not discussed by See but which is numerous enough to be included in and to extend this sub-genre. The diary approach, like the letter format, creates a sense of immediacy and allows the writer to edit and present his experiences from a certain point of view that need not seem to be interfered with by the author.

Lillian Day's The Youngest Profession (1940), a novel for adolescent girls, depends on the diary entries of a sixteen year old who makes being an ardent autograph-seeking movie fan nearly a full-time profession. The diary helps the reader participate more fully in her dogged and arduous pursuits of the famous film stars. The diary accounts in Florence Wobber's Calico Orchids: Forthright Diary of "Little June East" (1942) tell of the heroine's success in radio and her efforts to break into the Hollywood film industry. Whereas the illiterate letter-writers Lem G. Whillikins and Fanny Dopass unintentionally write things like, "'That there was PERSPI-RAYSHUN . . . ' I says, with a humidor cackull"<sup>20</sup> and ". . . all the Big Mogull and Stars in the Undustry Meats in his Hotel Cause its so Xcloosive,"<sup>21</sup> we find in the Wobber novel the most annoying and, generally, unamusing, sorts of intentional puns and plays on words and

<sup>20</sup>Lynton Wright Brent, Gitting' in the Movies; Adventures of a Country Boy in Hollywood; Pitchers by the Author (Hollywood: Moderncraft, 1936), p. 1.

<sup>21</sup>Richard Henry Lee, Nights and Daze in Hollywood (New York: Macaulay, 1934), p. 19.

phrases: "Hollywild Bullyvard," "The Sepia Derby," "I am the only American Sweatheart whose fan male is running out," etc. Libbie Block's The Hills of Beverly (1957), as mentioned before, is written in the style of an eighteenth century court diary, and a journal in Gavin Lambert's Inside Daisy Clover (1963) allows the protagonist to describe her own often unhappy experiences while rising, falling, and rising again in Hollywood, as well as in her personal life.

Three others novels bear mentioning in this regard. In I Lost My Girlish Laughter (1938) by Jane Allen, the protagonist reveals the inner workings of the film industry through a series of movie jargon-laden telegrams, letters, and diary excerpts from her vantage point as secretary to a successful Hollywood producer. The publishers claimed that "Jane Allen" was a pseudonym for an actual secretary to one of the most powerful film magnates; and the epistle/diary approach suggests unedited, undiluted, and accurate reports from someone on the "inside." Another novel, Joseph Patrick McEvoy's Hollywood Girl (1929), is a sequel to his Show Girl (1928) and again features chorus girl Dixie Dugan who finds success in the talkies and marriage to a millionaire; in McEvoy's Society (1931), she divorces her husband and returns to Hollywood. The narratives of the last two novels are advanced through letters, telegrams, diary entries, menus, newspaper stories, clippings, excerpts from Variety, snatches of dialogue, and strained stream-of-consciousness passages. These techniques evoke the flavor and whirl of Hollywood

while suggesting humorously the madcap nature of Dixie's life there.

The fourth and most pervasive sub-genre specified by See is the detective novel set in Hollywood. For her, there are three types of detective novels--the classic detective story, which is a kind of pleasant intellectual game; the comic detective story; and the neo-detective novel "invented" by Dashiell Hammett and proceeding in terms of psychological motivation and featuring decidedly unpleasant violence.

Literally hundreds of detective novels, of all types, have been set in Hollywood; and over time, some of the most important names and some of the most prolific writers of detective fiction have turned their hands to the subject of Hollywood: W.T. Ballard, Andrew Bergman, Earl Derr Biggers, Anthony Boucher, Carter Brown, Raymond Chandler, Leslie Charteris, Octavus Roy Cohen, George Harmon Coxe, Dorothy Cameron Disney, Arlo and Carmen Edington, James M. Fox, Jerome Owen Fox, Erle Stanley Gardner, William Campbell Gault, Cromwell Gibbons, Frank Gruber, Brett Halliday, Dorothy B. Hughes, Lee Hutchings, Clifford Knight, Jonathon Latimer, Lange Lewis, Ross Macdonald, Stuart Palmer, Hugh Pentecost, Judson Philips, Richard S. Prather, Ellery Queen, Richard Sale, Charles Saxby, Jimmy Starr, and Lee Thayer.

In my own examination of the myriad Hollywood detective novels, I have observed several standard plots: (1) someone, usually a villainous star, is murdered (often with real bullets substituted for blanks) on the set and the daily

rushes of the film being shot fix the exact time of the killing or reveal how the crime was done; (2) a much-despised Hollywood personality, a gossip columnist or prima donna film queen, is murdered and the detective must find who among a long list of people that hated the victim is guilty; (3) a star's death is deemed a suicide by the studio and/or the police and the detective must prove it's murder; (4) a stand-in for a star is murdered and the detective must discover who thought they were really killing the star; (5) a star disappears from the studio lot and must be found; or (6) a bit player, extra, screenwriter, or stunt person is accused of murder and must flee while trying to locate the real culprit.

Blackmail is understandably ubiquitous in these novels about people who maintain phony identities and personality facades. Drugs sometimes figure in the plots, as does the Mafia or underworld; and the writing, apart from the many humorous stories, is mostly "hard-boiled." The detectives are frequently outsiders, ex-policemen from other cities, well-known detectives like Ellery Queen, amateur sleuths like Hildegard Withers, or experts brought in to give technical advice for a film. Through their eyes, we see the Hollywood environment as if for the first time and share with them in a process of discovery, both in terms of the crime and of the city itself.

In trying to understand why so many detective novels, of all types, have been set in the film capital, See notes that Hollywood supplies a "mechanical unreality" in the form of

"physical sets, costumes and properties." These "infinitely multiply the possible modes of murder, murder weapons, places for the villain to hide, or costumes in which he may disguise himself" while offering at the same time possible escape for intended victims as well.<sup>22</sup> Hollywood Novel conventions mesh well with detective novel conventions. For examples, wild and noisy Hollywood parties are excellent settings for murder and provide the detective with a ready-made guest list of suspects, while large-scale Hollywood funerals for victims offer him a further chance to observe possible culprits.<sup>23</sup>

Even more beneficial than the physical accoutrements of Hollywood, according to See, is "the psychological unreality provided by the mythical image of Hollywood."<sup>24</sup> This comes, in part, from the exoticism and glamour which delight the reader as he and the detective track the criminal. Also, Hollywood characters make ideal suspects because, as stereotypes, they can be relied upon to react in certain ways and to provide certain kinds of information when interrogated; because they are minimally-developed characters, once the criminal is revealed, they cannot undercut the virtuosity of the detective's solution by proving themselves superior. But the most important psychological contrast between detective novels set in Hollywood and those set elsewhere involves the

<sup>22</sup>See, p. 151.

<sup>23</sup>See, p. 152.

<sup>24</sup>See, p. 151.

question of what is real. Whereas all detective novels try to distinguish between the artificial and the real, in detective Hollywood Novels, the search is to sort out the "subtle contrasts between degrees of artificiality,"<sup>25</sup> for fictional Hollywood is a complex tangle of illusion and reality in its physical setting, its characters, and its myths.

My quarrels with See's remarks on the detective sub-genre are two. First, I believe her percentages are incorrect when she asserts that over one-quarter of all the fiction about Hollywood is in the form of the detective novel. My figures, obtained by first sorting out from her bibliography all the novels through 1963 which were not, strictly speaking, Hollywood Novels or which were set in the cinema industries of other countries and by adding novels I had discovered independently, indicate that thirty-five percent of them are detective, private eye, or murder mystery novels, a significantly higher figure.

I also feel that, although she sets forth the three divisions as equal, she concentrates on the neo-detective type with its grim and psychological violence to the exclusion of examples of the classic puzzle and comic types, particularly the latter. She singles out those she terms "masters" of the neo-detective form as it is set in Hollywood in the personages of writers Raoul Whitefield, Richard Sale, and Raymond Chandler as their talents are displayed in Death

<sup>25</sup>See, p. 154.



in a Bowl (1930), Lazarus #7 (1942), and The Little Sister (1949), respectively.

Overlooked are such archetypal examples of the classic puzzle detective novel set in Hollywood as Arlo and Carmen Edington's 1929 The Studio Murder Mystery (a much-despised movie villain is killed and several of his enemies confess); Herbert Crooker's 1930 The Hollywood Murder Mystery (a murder takes place on a studio lot after a swanky Beverly Hills party and the suspects include a movie queen); Madelon St. Dennis's 1932 The Death Kiss (real bullets are substituted for blanks during filming); or Robert Caine Frazer's 1961 The Hollywood Hoax (murders figure into a studio power struggle). These are but a few examples among dozens of this type.

The comic detective novels are not as numerous but nonetheless make a significant contribution. A strong example is The Case of the Baker Street Irregulars (1940) by Anthony Boucher (a pseudonym for William Anthony Parker White). In it, a motley and eccentric group of Sherlock Holmes aficionados oversee the filming of The Adventures of the Speckled Band (to protect "the Sacred Writings" from irreverent treatment) and manage also to solve the murder of the widely-disliked screenwriter they had come to monitor. Another example is Ben Hecht's I Hate Actors! (first published under this title in 1944 and re-released in 1946 as Hollywood Mystery!). Here, the protagonist's detection proceeds amidst happy chaos brought about by an assortment of Hollywood zanies, including a secretary named Miss Wonder-

shake and a man who wears a purple turban and sticks steel skewers through his cheeks and tongue as a party trick.

See's neglect of these and other significant Hollywood Novels suggests that her study is incomplete, particularly in identifying and describing sub-genres and other aspects of the genre. I believe she leaves undiscussed four more sub-genres--romances, adolescent fiction, religious novels, and romans à clef--as well as novels written by authors intimately involved with the Hollywood filmmaking tradition. This last type of novel, although not a sub-genre itself, appears in all the sub-genres and, in terms of its numbers, is a powerful force within the larger genre of Hollywood Novels.

In sheer volume, romances set in Hollywood are the next largest sub-genre after Hollywood detective novels; they have been a consistent and visible presence since 1918 with the publication of The Close Up . . ., in which Margaret Turnbull follows the love life of an unassuming silent film star as she works through a romance with a man whose health problems and secret service work prevent, until the very end, their union. The heroine's success in films brings fame and wealth, but they are no substitute for genuine love. This convention, a variation on the "money can't buy happiness" motif, became a staple in Hollywood romance novels; it takes on new significance in a genre in which the main characters are involved with a profession and life style where the illusion of happiness is so pervasive.

The romance sub-genre manifests several characteristics.

The protagonist, almost to a novel, is female; she is seeking a place in Hollywood or she has already found it, in which case she is looking for love to supplement her success. The finding and securing of a love object can take several forms. She finds "Mr. Right," they fall in love, something comes between them, but eventually things work out and they are joined. Or she may pursue her film career, endure problems and trials (especially the unwanted sexual attentions and pressures of evil established Hollywood men such as directors or producers or the subterfuge of jealous females who seek to undermine her); she finally triumphs; and, because she has retained her virtue, she finds the man of her dreams.

The reader, one can assume, is looking for a novel of fantasy in which happiness prevails, all loose ends are tied, and the story closes with the satisfying click of a box lid coming down. It is possible to assert, I believe, that Hollywood is an excellent setting for the seemingly endlessly popular romance genre because it adds yet another dimension to the unreality of the stories. Hollywood is a place where anything can happen: small town, unknown girls can make it big there (or so the legend goes); fame and success can happen overnight. Also, there is a limitless supply of handsome, desirable men as love interests; there are stereotyped evil presences in the forms of foreign directors, manipulative producers, "bohemian" screenwriters, and ruthless femmes fatales. And, because anything is possible in the movie world, a concocted story, manipulated to bring

about certain ends and in which everyone lives happily ever after, is no more artificial than Hollywood or its films; and because of this, the rather preposterous stories can be made to seem even more plausible than romances placed in other settings.

A few examples will indicate typical story lines. In Mark Luther Lee's Presenting Jane McRae (1920), heroine Jane has a miserable life waiting tables in her drunken father's hotel; she must break off her engagement to Stuart when she learns of a past affair. A friend, Arthur, gets her into the movies, marries her, and, as a film director, propels her to stardom by devious means. After Stuart reappears and a triangle ensues, she finds true love with him and happiness to add to her fame. In Louis Joseph Vance's Linda Lee Incorporated (1922), Lucinda Druce leaves her wealthy husband and becomes the film star of the title, finding success and the admiration of a handsome film actor. Still, Hollywood does not fulfill her life and she returns to her marriage to find happiness. In Rob Wagner's Tessie Moves Along (1928), another waitress breaks into the New York film business as an extra, is overlooked because she refuses her favors to a famous director, and yet finds Hollywood film success while remaining virtuous, marries an oil millionaire, and is accepted into "society."

The impediment to romance in Richard Halliday's Fanfare (1929) is the stage mother of a famous star who eventually chooses marriage over her mother's ambitions for her. In

Jack Preston's Screen Star (1932), a similar mother and an evil studio mogul, with the help of a "marriage clause" in the contract, conspire to keep film star Lira Morgan from marrying the man she loves, thereby forcing her into an illicit union. Marriage and renewed Hollywood success eventually transpire. Years of burdens and problems in supporting a large family in the Bronx pay off when Mamie McLaughlin is discovered by a talent scout, achieves overnight film success, and finds a wonderful husband in the appropriately titled Pretty Girls Get There (1941) by Charles Hanson Towne. Two novels, Fannie Heaslip Lea's Happy Landings (1930) and Maysie Greig's Professional Lover (1933), combine the film success and marriage motifs by having the married lovers, united after great tribulation, appear together in films.

Another sub-genre, which in a few instances overlaps with the romance, is the religious novel set in Hollywood. These novels, possibly because of their small promise of commercial gain, were rarely made available through name publishing companies but were printed by the authors themselves or by religious publishing houses such as Westernlore, Benziger Brothers, and Zondervan. Setting their novels in Hollywood allowed the authors to provide the ultimate environment of corruption and evil to tempt a protagonist who could then, by dint of his deep religious convictions or those of the people who surround him, overcome temptation and resist sin. The heightened level of temptation in Hollywood sets off this triumph more strikingly than other sorts of

environments might be able to for the possibilities for sin, in all its manifestations, are supposedly infinite in movie-land. And, as Paul Rader's Big Bug (1932) points up, Hollywood is not only a center of sin but also a place where many cry out for salvation and many souls can be saved.

This, too, is the message of Thornwell Jacobs's Drums of Doomsday (1942). Here, John Roderick, a middle-aged, unmarried, conservative minister of the strongest Presbyterian church in the south (in Atlanta), happens into a movie theater where he sees a film in which the star Maria Rodriguez (nee Mary Roderick) seems to look out from the screen directly at him and pleads for him to be what he really is deep down inside. On that basis, he gives up his church and begins a campaign through the press, radio, and film to "speak the truth" about the politics of the New Deal and other things he believes are bringing about America's doom. He travels to Hollywood, discovers Maria is his cousin, and uses his philosophy to reform drunkards and degenerates in the movie colony. Ironically, the novel not only reflects extremely conservative politics and theological viewpoints, but it also manifests blatant class and racial prejudices seemingly at odds with a religious theme.

A worldly and dissipated film comedian finds a lost boy, takes him in, and pushes him to success as a child star in Francis J. Finn's Bobbie in Movieland (1921). But Bobbie longs for a return to the Catholic teachings of his mother; when the comedian and his film company attend Bobbie's first

communion, they are moved by his purity and faith and are all permanently changed by the religious experience. Romance enters in as Bobbie's mother and the comedian, who had once been in love, are reunited. Quotes from scripture precede each chapter of Paul Bailey's Song Everlasting (1946), in which a deeply religious wife and her agnostic novelist husband move to Hollywood where he works as a screenwriter. But film life taints him, causing him to drink and driving her away. They are reunited after the war and, free of Hollywood, strive for a simple and good family life. While working as a lineman, he is electrocuted; the wife, in grief, tries to kill herself. But after going to Heaven and talking to her husband, she is inspired to return to earth to raise her family.

Other titles in this sub-genre are Lon Riley Woodrum's If You Hear a Song (1952), in which the conflict of a traditional Christian denomination versus a cultist religion indigenous to Hollywood is played out, and Patric Knowles's Even Steven (1960), which details the "plusses" and "minuses" in the life of a dead Hollywood film and television scriptwriter named Steven, showing that he is "even" and, therefore, can be swept to Heaven on a surge of love provided by the wife who preceded him in death. It may also be possible to include here Russell Janney's The Miracle of the Bells (1946), a novel that turns on the premise that the purity and deep religious convictions of a prematurely dead Hollywood starlet cause the bells to ring in a church in her hometown

during her funeral.

Another sub-genre left unaddressed by See is adolescent fiction, a strain that, with the publication of Victor Appleton's Tom Swift and His Wizard Camera; or, Thrilling Adventures While Taking Moving Pictures (1912) followed by Appleton's "Motion Picture Chums," "Moving Picture Boys," "Movie Boys" and Laura Lee Hope's "Moving Picture Girls" series, provided the very first film novels.

A Hollywood setting in books for youngsters is surprising, in a sense, since other sub-genres seem to be placed there to capitalize on the unreal, fantastical, or sinful environment, associations not appropriate for adolescent fiction. I believe, however, that from the beginning, the authors, nearly all the creators of lengthy series repeatedly using various principal characters, continually cast about for new and unique situations and settings--gimmicks, in a sense--to bring life and variety to their stories which otherwise must be propped up only by morals and lessons on right and wrong, things, after a while, tedious to children and adults alike. This is, no doubt, the case in Elizabeth Borton's Pollyanna in Hollywood (1931) (although here the contrast of the worldly Hollywood versus Pollyanna's pure and happy home is played on, too). It is also true of Jill's Hollywood Assignment (1958) and Hollywood Nurse (1963), both by Marguerite Nelson, a prolific writer of adolescent fiction. Gladys Malvern's Hollywood Star (1953) is the third novel in a series for teenaged girls about the adventures of



a ballet dancer. Here, she comes to Hollywood to make a film based on Pavlova's life. This novel, like Rose Gordon and Ione Reed's Stunt Girl (1940), which details the life a teenaged movie stunt performer, also allows the author to challenge the youngsters who read the book to identify a talent and develop it by showing vivid examples of teens who did and found remarkable success.

Obviously, "the movies" would be a compelling setting for impressionable youths and, therefore, would help to draw them into object lessons. The film world is made especially appealing in Lorraine Maynard's Twinkle, Little Movie Star (1927), the story of child actress Vivi Corelli, who stars in Hollywood films with Scamp the police dog. But Hollywood, some authors want their youthful readers to know, can also be a frustrating place where success is not always satisfying, even for the winner of the Miss America contest, as is demonstrated in Dixie Willson's Hollywood Starlet (1942). She and the heroine of Beatrice Burton's The Hollywood Girl (1927) trade film fame for marriage with the boy next door. Madeline Brandeis sounds a darker note in Adventures in Hollywood; A Story of the Movies For Girls (1937) when she spells out the perils of the movie capital and urges girls to look for happiness at home instead.

The fourth sub-genre I would add to those designated by See is the roman à clef, an unsurprising development in an industry that thrives on publicity, in which privacy is non-existent, and that is supported by a public eager for facts

about the lives of the famous. Up till the 1960's, the sub-genre was visible and important; but in terms of numbers, explicitness of details, and one-to-one correspondence between the characters and the famous people being featured, it was not as fully exploited as it was to become after that time, when "tell all" novels and autobiographies with all facts unvarnished began pouring out of Hollywood.

Frequently, the early romans à clef only approximated the lives of the famous, as in the characterization of a Mary Pickford type silent star in Henry Kichell Webster's Real Life Into Which Miss Leda Swan of Hollywood Makes an Adventurous Excursion (1921). In some instances, a fictionalized real event or person plays a small part in a novel largely about other things; this technique, probably used to convey a sense of authenticity, appears in Anne Gardner's Reputation: A Story of April Low, Known as "The Wickedest Woman in Hollywood" (1929). The innocent April Low is implicated in the shooting of director DeLain Thomas, who appears to be based on William Desmond Taylor, until the drug-crazed star Mona Novis comes clean. (Novis is modeled on Mary Miles Minter and Mabel Normand, both of whom were considered by the police as likely suspects, even though neither confessed.)

As the years passed, the fictional characterizations of the well-known in Hollywood more closely paralleled the real life celebrities and took on more importance in the novels. In Budd Schulberg's treatment of a film tycoon's rise to power, What Makes Sammy Run? (1941), there are portraits,

drawn from Schulberg's knowledge of Hollywood both as the son of a successful producer and as a screenwriter himself, of writer-producer Jerry Wald, playwright-screenwriter Norman Krasna, and screenwriters Tess Slesinger and Jules and Philip Epstein. In Jay Richard Kennedy's Prince Bart; A Novel of Our Times (1953), the obnoxious, sexually-driven tough guy film actor who ultimately behaves unselfishly to save his family while destroying himself in the process is probably modeled on John Garfield, who had died only the year before at the same age as the protagonist. Writers Peter Viertel and Charles Hamblett, both of whom had known him personally, take few pains to disguise colorful director John Huston in White Hunter, Black Heart (1953) and The Crazy Kill; A Fantasy (1956). In the latter, fictional director John Simpson (Huston) films a production of the The White Whale (Moby Dick) starring Gregory Pinch (Gregory Peck) in the Budgerigar Islands (The Canaries).

James Dean becomes the leather jacket- and sneaker-clad film star Johnny Preston, killed piloting an airplane at twenty-four in Walter Ross's The Immortal (1958); his life and talents unfold through frank interviews with people of both sexes who knew and, often, seduced him. Harold Robbins makes Howard Hughes into protagonist Jonas Cord in The Carpetbaggers (1961), a fictional history of Hughes's involvement with Hollywood and with Hollywood personalities who people the book under fictional names: cowboy star William Boyd ("Hopalong Cassidy") becomes "Nevada Smith" and "Rina

Marlowe" is a composite of June Haver and Jean Harlowe, among others. The dashing and paternity suit-plagued Errol Flynn is portrayed in his waning days as a hard-drinking, risk-taking has-been who dies trying to sustain his macho image in Earl Conrad's Crane Eden (1962). Fatty Arbuckle is portrayed as film comedian "The Feeb" in a rehash of his trial for allegedly murdering an aspiring starlet during a wild party in Garet Rogers's Scandal in Eden (1963). And F. Scott Fitzgerald's work as a screenwriter, though not very successful, gave him an opportunity to scrutinize firsthand the inner workings of a film studio. He used his observations to pen fictional portraits in The Last Tycoon (1941) of Louis B. Mayer and of Irving Thalberg. His depiction of the latter as "Monroe Stahr" showed an intense respect bordering on awe for Thalberg, Hollywood's "boy wonder."

Frequently, the romans à clef are written by people who, in a sense, "lived" the stories themselves and know the facts intimately so the novels serve as an objective correlative. They also relieve the author of a certain responsibility; he or she can always say that "no resemblance to any persons living or dead is intended." The writers can inform the reading public of the intimacies of the film world without indicting themselves. For example, film actress Patsy Miller writes in That Flannigan Girl (1939) of a few critical days in the life of a film star who at thirty-four (Miller's age at the time of writing) reflects on her youth and early loves and fortunes. Two non-Hollywood personalities, Helen

Lawrence Partridge and Margaret Buell Wilder, wrote thinly-veiled accounts of their interesting but sometimes less than happy experiences there in A Lady Goes to Hollywood (1941) and Hurry Up and Wait (1946), respectively. The former is a semi-fictional epistolary novel describing the author's adventures in Hollywood when she accompanied her husband there for the filming of his bestselling book (Bellamy Partridge's 1939 Country Lawyer). The latter recounts the author's work on a film script of her book Since You Went Away (1943), which was based on her letters to her soldier husband. In The Shoestring Symphony (1948), composer and conductor David Broekman couches in fiction his desperate days as a film studio musician who loses his job and very nearly everything but his dignity during the Depression.

A principal novel in this roman à clef/autobiography convention is Budd Schulberg's The Disenchanted (1950). This is the story of screenwriter Manley Halliday, a washed-up, alcoholic, and dissipated writer who had great prominence as a novelist in the 1920's, and Shep Stearns, a struggling young writer who idolizes him. The two travel at the behest of their studio to the winter carnival at a New England university to gather material for a film about college life. Despite Shep's efforts to guard him and shelter his reputation, Halliday falls off the wagon, behaves badly, and, ultimately, dies from the physical and emotional stress of the trip. Although Schulberg has repeatedly denied

it,<sup>26</sup> these are undoubtedly portraits of F. Scott Fitzgerald and Schulberg himself; the two made a similar informational trip together to the Dartmouth Winter Carnival shortly before Fitzgerald's death.

Screenwriter Schulberg is only one among dozens of people involved in some way with Hollywood who have written novels about life in the movie capital. It is natural for a writer to create out of familiar material, especially when the subject matter ensures large sales, as it does in this genre. In the case of Hollywood Novels, I think that readers respond positively to books they know were written by Hollywood personages because they believe this guarantees authenticity and they hope to learn something more intimate about life in movieland from the novels by authors on the "inside."

Probably most fascinating for the public are those novels penned by famous film stars. Although prior to 1964 there were only a few, Patsy Miller's previously mentioned book included, they seemed to blossom forth considerably after that date in conjunction with the growth in numbers of forthright screen star autobiographies. One in particular before 1964, however, proved popular, the 1951 Once Over Lightly (Round the Rugged Rocks in Great Britain) by Hollywood star David Niven; it is the story of a former British soldier who goes to Hollywood and finds film success and

<sup>26</sup>Budd Schulberg, "Why Manley Halliday is . . . Manley Halliday," Theater Arts, 42, No. 12 (Dec. 1958), 15-17.

love. No doubt, the book profited from the inclusion of autobiographical details. Crime on My Hands (1944) carried the name of actor George Sanders as author and featured him as protagonist. When an extra on the set of a film he's starring in is murdered, everyone believes he can solve the crime because of the detective roles he's played. And they do prove helpful as he exposes the killer. The appeal of the book, based on Sanders' supposed familiarity with Hollywood, was lessened somewhat when it was later revealed that hired ghost writers Craig Rice and Leigh Brackett in reality had authored the novel.

Screenwriters are the most prolific among Hollywood personalities who have written Hollywood Novels. Citing a few will give an indication of how large their numbers are: Stuart Palmer (Cold Poison [1954]), Robert Carson (The Magic Lantern [1952]), Anita Loos (A Mouse is Born [1951] and No Mother to Guide Her [1961]), Whitfield Cook (Roman Comedy; An Impolite Extravaganza [1954]), Ben Hecht (I Hate Actors! [1944]), Steve Fisher (I Wake Up Screaming [1941]), Cromwell Gibbons (Murder in Hollywood [1936]), Don Ryan (A Roman Holiday [1930]), and Jonathon Latimer (Black is the Fashion For Dying [1959]). Nathanael West's and F. Scott Fitzgerald's work as screenwriters without question influenced their portraits of Hollywood in The Day of the Locust (1939) and The Last Tycoon (1941), respectively. John O'Hara, too, author of Hope of Heaven (1938) and The Big Laugh (1962), spent time in Hollywood as a screenwriter, as

did Raymond Chandler, creator of The Little Sister (1949), and William Saroyan, who wrote Rock Wagram (1951).

Others connected in various ways to filmmaking also wrote Hollywood Novels. Frances Marion, author of Minnie Flynn (1925), created screenplays, too, and has been "rediscovered," in a sense, by feminist film historians and others in her capacity as an occasional film director. Three producers, James S. Pollak (who also worked as a screenwriter), Richard Brooks, and Madeline Brandeis, created The Golden Egg (1946), The Producer (1951), and Adventure in Hollywood; A Story of the Movies for Girls (1937), respectively. Lenora Hornblow drew on her observations of Hollywood as the wife of a prominent producer to write Memory and Desire (1950). C.E. Carle and Dean M. Dorn were working as Hollywood public relations men when their Hollywood Novel, Nine More Lives (1947), was written under the pseudonym "Michael Morgan." Adela Rogers St. John, who wrote features about Hollywood and other sensational matters for the Hearst papers and sometimes worked as a screenwriter, drew on her considerable knowledge about the film business and its personnel (she was confidant to many stars) to create The Skyrocket . . . (1925).

Like Budd Schulberg, other children of famous Hollywood personages turned their hands to fiction. Jesse Lasky, Jr., the son of a pioneering Hollywood film producer and himself a screenwriter, penned Naked in a Cactus Garden (1961), a novel about a ruthless and ambitious mogul. There Must Be a Pony (1960), which depicts the traumas of a movie star accused of



murdering her lover and who, though cleared, goes insane, draws its power, in part, from the personal observations of its author Jim Kirkwood, the son of silent film star Lila Lee and actor James Kirkwood, Sr.

Although almost all the novels I have read and researched fit into one of the eight sub-genres I have defined or meet requirements discussed in this chapter, there are some Hollywood Novels which fall outside these parameters and which, although only individual novels, help by their presence to define the genre. They show, in a way, the remarkable adaptability of Hollywood and its inhabitants to various forms of narrative and help demonstrate how authors of all persuasions have seen the film world as desirable subject matter for their efforts.

Two of these novels, which are partly set in Hollywood, are unique in that their appeal is based on exaggerated Negro dialect, a type of humor apparently acceptable at the time they were released, as I infer from the fact that one was published by Alfred A. Knopf. That novel, Hugh Wiley's The Prowler (1924), is one in a series of books about a black man, Vitus "Wildcat" Marsden, and his goat Lily, who pursue to the corners of the country the ever-elusive "Lady Luck." This time, their travels take them to California where they try breaking into the movies. The other novel, Eugene Henry Huffman's "Now I Am Civilized" (1930) is the memoirs in dialect of Ras-Taferi Hounin-Kounin, a black man who tries to learn white speech, straightens his hair, and gains accept-

ance in the white world. His adventures take him all over the world, where he sees things like the "Eyeful Tower" and the "S'bawn." Of particular interest is his employment as a cook in the home of a Hollywood film magnate where he is seduced after a drunken party by the white film star Theda Baraly. The novel's contents, at least from this historical vantage point, are offensive enough; but the author's preface adds further insult as it explains how some Negroes have an "ear" for educated white speech and are able to speak it while remaining illiterate and unintelligent.

Fantasy finds a place in the genre with Eric Knight's novella The Flying Yorkshireman (1938). In it, English protagonist Sam Small, who had been content before to drink with his mates at a Yorkshire tavern, finds he has acquired the art of levitation, the technique of flying like a bird, and other magical feats which insure him instant success in Hollywood. Another satirical fantasy is Alex Austin's The Greatest Lover in the World (1956). Its dead narrator takes his place, in terms of bizarreness, alongside the narrating horse of Told Under a White Oak Tree (1922) and the epistle-writing dog narrator of Al Martin's Dog Gone Hollywood (1930). He is silent screen idol Ramon Ramano (ne Willie Schusbruber) who has been dispatched from Hell by the devil to find the world's greatest lover. He discovers him in a Jackson Heights, Long Island dentist who earns the title by spending the night with the sexually-demanding former silent star Gerda Galdi. A narrator from the opposite sphere, a

guardian angel from Heaven, describes the evolution of the affection between two lovers, one an actress who works in Hollywood, across the years in Elswyth Thane's Remember To-day; Leaves From a Guardian Angel's Notebook (1941).

I have always wondered at the relative lack of satire within the Hollywood Novel genre before 1964; the unrelieved seriousness of most Hollywood Novels of that time is pointed up even more acutely by those few which do make fun of their subjects. The delightfully light-hearted spoof of a would-be movie star in Harry Leon Wilson's Merton of the Movies (1922) is recalled in H. Allen Smith's Mister Zip (1952) and Whitfield Cook's Roman Comedy; An Impolite Extravaganza (1951), both satires on western movie stars. In the first, a puerile midwesterner and avid movie-goer is turned into a cowboy movie idol by film executives and ad men; but he longs to discover the "real West" and, much to the dismay of the studio bigwigs, sets out to find it, getting into a number of scrapes along the way. In the latter novel, forty-six-year-old bespectacled, roly-poly Cubitt Cheever, a famous Hollywood actor known as "The Pink Silk Cowboy," encounters a multitude of preposterous problems when he travels to Rome to make a picture for a tough-minded female Italian film director.

Two other novels bear mentioning because, although satirical like those above, they are unique in that they treat the other side of the Hollywood coin--the movie-going public who buy the film industry's products and the effect that

product has on them. In J.B. Priestley's Albert Goes Through (1933), a simple clerk with a fascination for film star Felicity Storm attends her latest film, despite having the flu. He has fortified himself with patent medicine which makes him delirious. Hallucinating, he believes himself to be a part of the screen's action in which he is called upon to rescue Felicity from several dangerous situations. Back to normal later, he is sceptical of movies and their stars and settles into marriage with a typist. A second novel, Dan Chushman's Brothers in Kickapoo (1962), describes the chaos that ensues when a Hollywood film company shoots a film on location in a small midwestern town. The populace go to desperate lengths to find ways to get into the movie and to share, for however fleeting a moment, some of the fame and glamour they associate with Hollywood films.

Following her discussion of sub-genres in Hollywood Novels, Carolyn See completes her dissertation with five essays, each a chapter in length, on themes and trends in the genre: "Conventions of Artificiality," "The Failure of Sexuality," "Art, Craft and Money," "Illusions of Time and Place," and "Goofy Unreality." I believe these chapters do not present specific, identifiable parameters and concrete details which help establish or define the genre; rather they give highly subjective, personal and, in some cases, impressionistic reactions to the novels (most of which are not the most representative or appropriate examples she could have used) and, therefore, add little to the definition of the

genre from 1916-1963 that I am attempting to set forth. Only her remarks on "goofy unreality" and time and place seem to have application for my purposes in the third and fourth chapters.

The essay "Goofy Unreality" takes its title from Edmund Wilson's The Boys in the Back Room (1941), in which he indicts the unreal environment of California as an unfit place for serious literature to be set. See believes it is this very atmosphere that determines "not only much of the genre's subject matter and structure, but its literary quality."<sup>27</sup> She first defines "goofy unreality" both as an authorial attitude and a point of view within the novels by citing examples from Harry Kurnitz's Invasion of Privacy (1955), Anita Loos's No Mother to Guide Her (1961), and Aldous Huxley's After Many a Summer Dies the Swan (1939). The essay's second section assumes that "goofy unreality," while heightening the Hollywood background, does so at the expense of the characters by creating "insensitivity and economic sellout, physical [geographic] escape, suicide or insanity."<sup>28</sup> Here, she cites Alfred Hayes's My Face For the World to See (1958), Sidney Alexander's The Celluloid Asylum (1951), and Jim Kirkwood's There Must Be a Pony! (1960).

In the third section of this essay, See relates the isolation and loss of identity by fictional Hollywood inhabi-

<sup>27</sup>See, p. 411.

<sup>28</sup>See, p. 411.

tants not only to "goofy unreality," but also to a "larger, cultural isolation which comes alike from failure to understand or relate to the American dream, and failure to understand Hollywood's position with regard to American expectations."<sup>29</sup> She concludes her essay, and the dissertation, by using Alan Marcus's Of Streets and Stars (1960) and Gavin Lambert's Inside Daisy Clover (1963) to show how "goofy unreality" undermines "the stature and importance of characters in the Hollywood novel, reducing them at worst to stereotypes and at best to passive observers."<sup>30</sup>

Carolyn See speculates in this last essay about the future of Hollywood--which she believes is secure--and the future of the Hollywood Novel tradition, which she sees as "very much alive."<sup>31</sup> She asserts her hope that a decline in Hollywood's "flamboyance" will eventually eliminate local color type novels which depend strictly on the "goofy unreality" or the "extravaganza" found in Hollywood. She believes that, even if "the external paraphernalia" of the novels loses its importance, the themes that she has set forth and elaborated on will remain. She projects Hollywood Novels of the future (1964 and beyond) peopled with characters who "may transcend their gaudy trappings" and who, "by the intensity of their encounters" with those themes she has discussed,

<sup>29</sup>See, p. 411.

<sup>30</sup>See, p. 412.

<sup>31</sup>See, p. 468.

will be part of "stories equal, not to the best of Hollywood tradition, but to the best of the American one."<sup>32</sup> The actual course Hollywood and the Hollywood Novel followed from 1964 through 1981 will be discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>32</sup>See, pp. 468-69

### Chapter 3

#### Beyond the Limitations of Place: The Hollywood Novel, 1964--1981

In the twenty intervening years since Carolyn See made her prophecies about Hollywood and Hollywood Novels and their characters, a multitude of surface changes have occurred both in the film capital and the literature it spawns. But, ultimately and ironically, some of the basic qualities that characterize the Hollywood Novel genre have remained unchanged, as an examination of the novels written after 1963 will bear out, so that the contemporary Hollywood Novel remains, despite years of adjustments, both small and large, much the same as it was in earlier decades.

Over the years, the novels' setting--Hollywood--has been modified and adapted; but as See predicted, the film capital is still, in a sense, going strong. Entertainment products are still created there, as she foresaw; but their nature is completely different from what it was during the time she wrote about. Gone are the days of the 1920's, 1930's, 1940's, and early 1950's, when the town was controlled by the major studios which mass-produced movies. The assembly line is gone; in its place is a "gigantic 'cottage' industry--a farrago of freelancers . . . who operate on their own, separate from the factory, and get paid piecework



rates."<sup>1</sup> There is a greater emphasis on artistry, in a sense, because people are creating independent of studio needs for films to fill their theaters with. But, independent producers (who are sometimes the filmmakers themselves) must win financial support from one of the major studios which control distribution and are directed not by powerful moguls but by production heads.

The old studio names are still visible--Columbia, Paramount, Universal, MGM, United Artists, Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Brothers--but they have either mushroomed into conglomerates, such as Columbia has, with large numbers of holdings; or they have been subsumed by conglomerates with other wide and varied associations, as Universal has been by MCA, Inc. Paramount, for instance, is a subsidiary of GULF + Western Industries, Inc., which also owns Bostonian Shoes, the New Jersey Zinc Company, Supp-Hose, Simon & Schuster, D.R. Willem Cigars, Peavy Paper Mills, Schrafft's Candies, Collyer Insultated Wire, and over three hundred other companies. Each film corporation aims for fewer completed films per year than in the heyday of studio control; they hope to strike it big with a small number rather than making many films which all do moderately well.<sup>2</sup>

This filmmaking is done mostly on location abroad or in

<sup>1</sup>James Monaco, American Film Now (New York: New American Library, 1979), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Monaco, pp. 36-37.

this country, and geographical locations other than Hollywood have learned how to accommodate the filmmakers. For example, New York City has a department within its government whose sole responsibility is to oversee the dozens of films which are shot there on location every year; and other cities have followed suit. Many states, Texas and Georgia in particular, have created film commissions to actively recruit motion picture companies to make films within their borders, much like they recruit other sorts of industries. In an ironic reversal of a common stereotype in Hollywood Novels of the 1920's, 1930's, and 1940's--a naive Iowan travels to movieland seeking his fortune--the state of Iowa now solicits filmmakers to come there; it, in a sense, brings Hollywood to Iowa.

So, although methods and structures have changed a great deal, Hollywood in the business sense of the term is still very much alive; but the city itself is no longer the focal point for non-television filmmaking per se. Most television filming, however, is done there in Universal Studios or in other studios in Burbank.

The old Hollywood is still visible in some forms, the Hollywood Bowl, for example; but other icons of earlier Hollywood Novels, such as Grauman's Chinese Theater, are walled in by contemporary buildings or are now located in high crime areas. The Hollywoodland sign has lately been restored and reconstructed after falling into dilapidation. When director John Schlesinger was filming Nathanael West's

classic Hollywood Novel, The Day of the Locust, as recently as 1974, he was able to use neither of these famous Hollywood landmarks because of their contemporary conditions. He recreated Grauman's in an enormous sound stage and produced the illusion of the Hollywoodland sign by building only the "H" and "O" and suggesting the rest by using a picture postcard, an interesting technique in view of the novel's statements about illusion and reality. The model for the San Bernardino Arms, where Tod Hackett and the other motley Hollywood hangers-on of the novel lived, was still standing, but was so cluttered by contemporary paraphernalia that another location had to be built. In fact, almost nothing of the 1939 Hollywood that West wrote about remained and could be used in the film.

Sunset Strip, another symbol of the golden days of Hollywood appearing in the earlier novels, is a notorious area for kooks of all kinds; it is peopled by prostitutes and is dotted with seedy shops and clubs, many of which set trends in violent and bizarre punk rock and other sorts of contemporary music that are promoted by and, in turn, feed off the myriad record companies headquartered in Hollywood and Los Angeles, which, in turn, are owned by the conglomerates that control the film industry. The smoggy view from Mulholland Drive is cluttered by construction. The old city of Hollywood, often described in the early Hollywood Novels as just a small, gossip town and deplored by H. L. Mencken, after a visit, as a dull place where everyone was in bed at

10:00 in order to rise for early filming, is a metropolis, sliced into divisions by car-laden freeways. English, in some sections, is a second language to Spanish. The glamorous and famous of movies and television still live in Beverly Hills, Brentwood, and Malibu; but they share their luxurious neighborhoods with rock musicians, sports stars, and even oil-rich Arab sheiks.

Gone are the studio backlots. Their locations made them choice real estate; when they were sold off at exorbitant prices and leveled, as was MGM's in the late 1970's, historical landmarks were bulldozed, buildings and scenery that had appeared over and over in films through the years and which had, therefore, permeated the American consciousness. Twentieth Century Fox sold its backlot in 1982, so that only Universal's remains; thousands of people are drawn to visit it each year as though to recapture some of the past glamour of the Hollywood system of lore.

This idea of glamour, in spite of the tawdriness of the reality and all the changes the town has undergone, persists. The term "Hollywood" still conveys connotations of a fantastical, magical place where everyone is beautiful, rich, famous, and sexually perfect. The television industry, which had mimicked the film pioneers in its move from New York to Hollywood, has taken up a good deal of the glamour slack. The public is as absorbed in television series and their stars and their private lives as the movie fans a few generations ago were in their favorites and so Hollywood's involve-

ment with the television industry has, in part, sustained the old associations. Still, to most people "Hollywood" is synonymous with filmmaking and the term elicits certain responses in that regard, as do stories set in Hollywood or stories whose characters are involved with films, either in Hollywood or elsewhere. So, it is hardly surprising that, just as Carolyn See predicted, the Hollywood Novel genre has remained, with some interesting changes and adaptations, strong and compelling.

I feel it is impossible to declare an "all-purpose-plot" for the years 1964-1981 as Carolyn See had done for 1915-1963. In fact, the following discussion will show that the stories of contemporary Hollywood Novels are so varied and diverse, the settings so far-flung, and the themes so eclectic as to make a general proclamation about them unwise and undesirable. Of the several hundred Hollywood Novels I examined during this period, only two--Brad Solomon's Jake & Katie (1979) and The Rat Factory (1971) by J.M. Ryan (a pseudonym for John Richard McDermott)--could meet the requirements for See's "all-purpose-plot."

Four of the eight sub-genres of Hollywood Novels designated in the preceding chapter--historical, detective, romance, and roman à clef--all remain intact, although the numbers of novels within each type have changed drastically for the most part. Novels written by people who are themselves somehow involved in filmmaking have remained nearly steady in numbers since 1963. Among all the Hollywood Novels

and other novels about film written since 1963 that I have researched, I was able to locate only two comic-epistolary novels--former film star Fay Baker's portrait of a hypochondrical actress in My Darling, Darling Doctors (1975) and F.P. Tullius's Out of the Death Bag in West Hollywood (1971)--suggesting that this narrative form is passé or that its popularity has waned dramatically. Equally unpopular for Hollywood Novels, despite the strong and vital born-again Christian movement of recent years, is the religious sub-genre, with only The Angel (1977) by Walter Bloch and Robert C. Munger attempting that format. Adolescent Hollywood Novels--one of the earliest sub-genres--is represented only by Maia Rodman's The Hollywood Kid (1966). And the "semi-pornographic" Hollywood Novel is no longer an applicable term, as I will show.

Other types of novels which characterize the period since 1963 and, therefore, help to define the genre reflect the various changes which have come about in Hollywood, in the filmmaking industry, and in our culture at large. The single largest impact on the genre appears to be related to the demise of Hollywood the town as a center for filmmaking. Because filmmaking began to be done on location, both in America and overseas, and because of growing importance in the American film market of pictures, directors, and actors from foreign film industries, novels began to be set on location more frequently or to treat international filmmaking and festivals. The number of these novels is so large that,

in some regards, it may be necessary to say that in contemporary fiction a location/international film novel genre exists as an influential adjunct genre to the Hollywood Novel. A later section of this chapter will point up just how influential it is.

Of the four sub-genres that carry over from the 1916-1963 period, the romance novels are the smallest group, decreasing from twenty-five during that time to six in the past twenty years. I believe, however, my figures may be misleading; for it is difficult to believe that this very popular sub-genre that so successfully capitalizes on the unreality and glamour of Hollywood or the filmmaking environment would wane, especially in view of the literally thousands of Harlequin and Silhouette books and others of their ilk that crowd the shelves of supermarkets, drugstores, and convenience shops. My methods of research may prohibit my discovering paperback titles such as these, however, because for finding novel titles I rely on reading reviews of current fiction in Bookman, Library Journal, and other reviewing publications which serve libraries that are looking for books--almost exclusively hardcover--to buy. And it is impossible to infer subject matter from titles in the National Union Catalog or Cumulative Book Index, unless key words such as "Hollywood" or "Cannes," for example, appear.

My speculation is that Hollywood Novel romances exist in greater numbers than I was able to determine. Also, I believe that the nature of contemporary fiction makes it impos-

sible for me to label certain novels romances, such as Jacqueline Susann's Once is Not Enough (1973) or Tamara Hovey's Among the Survivors (1971), because, although they play upon found, lost, and unrequited love, they are often more highly sexual (as in the former) or less happily resolved (as in the latter) than the classic romance specifications allow. Even a novel like Bob Cox's Jamaican American (1976), which traces the love life of filmmaker Ross Sawyer (the use of a male protagonist is a marked change from earlier Hollywood Novel romances) as he struggles to make successful either his marriage to a famous talent agent or his affair with a Jamaican revolutionary, pushes outside the romance parameters. It ends semi-tragically (a thing not permissible in the "pure" sense of the sub-genre) when Ross is killed by his lover's cohorts and his wife dies as a hurricane strikes the airliner in which she is riding (this outrageous sort of plot detail is fully in keeping with the sub-genre's conventions); but he is awarded an Academy Award posthumously and the reader, presumably, is left happy.

Four other romances fall more squarely into the traditional mold. In Daniel Fuch's West of the Rockies (1971), a Hollywood agent sacrifices his job and marriage to take responsibility for the sagging career of his lover and to help her salvage her life. James Wakefield Burke's The Sweet Dream (1964) depicts a Hollywood writer who must choose among his childhood sweetheart, a capable and caring career girl, and a passionate lover. In Jane Converse's Nurse in Holly-



wood (1965), a graduating nursing student must decide between Hollywood fame and her medical career and true love; and in Leland Cooley's The Dancer (1978), a classical ballet artist makes money from movies to help her needy father before returning to her original career and happiness. One other, Herman Raucher's There Should Have Been Castles (1978), proceeds in the classic romance vein--a dancer and a screen-writer find love and careers together--until the reader is pulled abruptly into the 1970's by the inclusion of an affair between the man and the young woman's mother!

If romantic Hollywood Novels have decreased in number during the last twenty years, the opposite is true for historical Hollywood Novels; their number nearly tripled after 1963. As one might expect with the passage of time, authors are freed to write these sorts of novels because they are afforded a clarity of insight about Hollywood of the past that a modern vantage point offers. Also, I believe they are responding to a nostalgic interest in history of any sort, not just that of the film industry, which is wide-spread among the reading public. This sub-genre, which particularly blossomed in the 1970's, takes several shapes.

First are those novels which, like their counterparts before 1964, trace the rise to power of influential Jewish film moguls, a subject that seems eternally appealing to Hollywood Novel authors. At work are the same familiar patterns and stereotypes that See pointed out in her discussion of the historical sub-genre. Thomas Wiseman's Czar

(1965) chronicles two movie kingpins--the frail, sensitive Alexander Sordorpf (Irving Thalberg) and the tyrannical Willi Seirmann (Louis B. Mayer) as they rise from the lower East Side of New York to the control of a major Hollywood studio whose power is finally broken by the 1950's Congressional investigations on monopoly, an historically accurate detail new to the sub-genre. In Mary Loos's The Beggars Are Coming (1974), the history of the Hollywood industry in general is traced through an examination of the Simon Moses family who built a dynasty on the strength of their control of Titan Films studio. Intertwined with the descriptions of studio power struggles are the experiences of an acting couple whose fortunes have followed those of the studio from silent pictures through WWII.

Studio power struggles are also central to Robert Wilder's The Sound of Drums and Cymbals (1974), a novel that details three generations of a Hollywood dynasty over fifty years: the first is "L.B." Bernard, a pioneer film mogul; the second is his son-in-law Deke Kinkaid, who is determined to prove that ability and not nepotism insured his inheriting the studio chief's job; the third is Deke's son Rodney, who struggles violently with his father in an effort to make the transition into television. The switch to television by a film dynasty is also featured in Harold Robbins's The Inheritors (1969), the final installment in his historical Hollywood trilogy which includes The Dream Merchants (1949) and The Carpetbaggers (1961).

Another historical Hollywood Novel in this tradition, Henry Denker's The Star-Maker (1977), looks back through time to the 1953 funeral of a widely-despised mogul to document his building of a dynasty and his struggles to maintain control of it in the face of a take-over by his daughter who is conspiring with the studio's second in command. Robert Ackworth's The Takers (1978) uses the fortieth anniversary celebration of Regency Pictures in 1962 to look back to its founding and to trace the lives and careers of the stars associated with the studio.

Another type of historical Hollywood Novel prevalent since 1964 is that which focuses on a single individual who represents some historical aspect of the industry. Mark Upton's The Dream Lover (1978) is set in the late 1920's and draws a portrait of a producer who is proud of the westerns, comedies, and, especially, the artistic silent films that are made at his uncle's studio where he works. He becomes a victim of others at the studio who, in collusion with the film company's bankers, are trying to take control and change production over into sound films, a move the protagonist believes would destroy the artistic integrity of films forever. His position was not an unusual one, though with hindsight it seems rather unrealistic; however, this is one of only a few Hollywood Novels of all periods to deal with the dilemma of the transition to sound pictures.

There are other books which use individuals to point up various historical facets of picture-making. For example, in

Len Deighton's Close-Up (1972), former war hero turned super star Eddie Brummage is traced from the 1940's, when as "Marshall Stone" his life is totally and completely controlled by the studio, as were the lives of real life stars under contract, to 1972 when he is a neurotic old man. The making of early westerns and the marketing of their stars is laid open in Darryl Ponicsan's Tom Mix Died For Your Sins (1975), a novel that incorporates accurate biography into a fictional format to trace Mix's evolution from 1904, when he had never ridden a horse, until his death in 1940 as a has-been cowboy actor. In Garson Kanin's Moviola (1979), ninety-two-year-old film tycoon Ben Farber takes advantage of a willing and submissive audience in the form of a conglomerate underling who has come to buy his studio to tell the history of the Hollywood film industry. As the old man becomes lost in reveries on Thomas Edison, Fatty Arbuckle, Charlie Chaplin, the actresses who competed for the part of Scarlet O'Hara, Marilyn Monroe, Greta Garbo, and others, he begins to see his memories as bits and pieces of film being edited on a moviola. His particular perspective reinterprets for the reader familiar stories and events of Hollywood's history. And Iris Rainer's The Boys In the Mail Room (1980) presents unique insiders' views of a movie studio as we see four young men, each clinging to life in Hollywood during the 1950's and 1960's and supporting himself by working in the mail room of a large film corporation. Each overcomes great personal problems to become successful; one of the four becomes a studio

head, another a Hollywood agent.

Another facet of the historical Hollywood Novel is the novel that criticizes the era of McCarthyism and blacklisting, a particularly unfortunate period that caused long-term problems not only for the individuals involved but also for the industry as well. It is interesting to note the time lag between the historical events and their inclusion in Hollywood Novels. Four novels up through 1962 attacked the events of blacklisting and "red-baiting" directly or indirectly. Almost another ten years passed before blacklisting resurfaced as a topic, this time in Anne Edwards's Shadow of a Lion, a 1971 novel about the unhappy life of a filmmaker who collaborated with the House Un-American Activities Committee and fled to Europe but who found that only death could ease his personal pain. In the mid-1970's, there were several novels which treated the events: Arthur Laurents's The Way We Were (1972), Zelda Popkin's "Dear Once" (1975), and Andrew Bergman's Hollywood and Levine (1975). The latter, a detective novel set in 1947, portrays newly-elected Congressman Richard Nixon leading the "witch hunt." Jill Robinson, who grew up in Hollywood as the daughter of influential producer Dore Schary, looks back at the early 1950's in Perdido (1978); hers is a chilling portrayal of how glamorous and carefree life was for those who cooperated with the probes or who were unaffected by them. The long-range disastrous effects of the era on a Soviet filmmaker and his family who had emigrated to Hollywood find play in another 1978 novel, Doris

Schwerin's Leanna: A Novel in Six Movements. In 1981, Edwin Corley and Richard Freidel hit away again at the subject of blacklisting in Long Shots and The Movie Lover, respectively.

A 1967 novel, Vera Caspary's The Rosecrest Cell, is set in 1938 and portrays the well-intentioned Communist activities of a Hollywood writer who loses his affection for the party and quits it after the Russo-Finnish War. He was the sort of individual who was later persecuted in the McCarthy era and who was portrayed in the novels that depicted those persecutions.

There are other historical novels which also demand attention and which have their own unique formats. For The Man Who Died Twice: A Novel About Hollywood's Most Baffling Murder (1976), Samuel Anthony Pepples researched 1922 Hollywood meticulously to present details such as newspaper headlines, restaurant menus, trolley car routes, song lyrics, clothing styles, etc. so that he could accurately describe the physical circumstances surrounding the still unsolved murder of director William Desmond Taylor. In the novel, Los Angeles policeman Ernie Carter, an expert on the historical case, is shot in the head in January, 1976, near Grauman's Chinese Theater and is propelled back through time to January, 1922, during the week which preceded Taylor's death. In fact, Ernie has entered Taylor's body and become him; therefore, he must determine who will commit the murder so that he can prevent it to keep from dying in that body.

As Taylor, he makes love to film star Mabel Normand, who

is a hopeless drug addict, and "Baby" Betty Blayne (the only fictional name in the book) and socializes with John Barrymore, Marion Davies, William Randolph Hearst, and other filmland notables of that time. Just as he believes he has solved the drug-related conspiracy and prevented the murder, he is shot by Betty Blayne's mother, an event the author claims is "an actual possibility." Blayne is, of course, based on Mary Miles Minter. Pepples used a fictitious name for this character because she was never charged with the crime, although she was considered a likely suspect. Luckily, Ernie is sent forward through time and arrives alive and in possession of the baffling murder's solution. The novel is a marvelous source of historical facts for Hollywood film buffs and certainly manifests one of the more unique narrative forms of all the Hollywood Novels I have researched.

Another historical novel which depends on an unusual structure is Linda Crawford's Something to Make Us Happy (1978). This book treats an element of the movie-audience equation that is often overlooked, the public whose lives and thoughts are influenced by Hollywood films. The novel traces two Scottish immigrants who settle in Detroit at about the time films were being invented, start a foundry, and raise children. As their lives progress, so does the film industry. To forget her difficult existence, the mother immerses herself in the glamour of Hollywood absorbed through fan magazines. Later, as an elderly widow, she accompanies her grown son to the film capital to see firsthand what she had

always dreamed of. An almost cinematic effect is created in the narrative by the inter-cutting of an omniscient narrator's account of family life and the Hollywood trip with a diary kept by the son that records the journey and the mother's discoveries.

It is obvious from these historical books that contemporary novelists are fascinated by Hollywood's past. Possibly, the changes that have occurred in Hollywood itself over the years are unsettling to authors wishing to pursue the town or filmmaking as subject matter. So, they cling to the old stereotypes, the tried-and-true Jewish dynasty, for example. They look backwards for subject matter such as the advent of sound or even the blacklisting era, for the persecuted men and women of that time make truly heroic protagonists, something that is difficult to find in contemporary Hollywood. Pepples's man who died twice flees a sordid and crime-infested Hollywood of the 1970's to find a brilliant and idyllic Hollywood of the past where even a sex- and drug-related murder seems relatively harmless and romantic.

Nowhere is the contrast between old Hollywood and new Hollywood more apparent than in Garson Kanin's Moviola (1979). Ben Farber, the ancient relic of times past who has seen Hollywood spring up, flourish, and wane and who has known all the glamour as well as the tinsel, contrasts magnificently with the insensitive executives of the conglomerate who want to buy out his studio as a "good business move." At novel's end, the young agent of the international corpora-



tion is so moved by the old man's history lessons and by the pictures he paints of the golden days of Hollywood that he abandons the negotiations, vows to keep the studio going, and sets about to marry the wife of the now-dead Farber; in a sense, he will become a younger version of the old man and preserve his ideals from former times in the face of the new Hollywood.

The roman à clef sub-genre which, in part, is at work in Moviola, is closely akin to the historical novel. It is history with a fictional slant or fiction with a biographical "key," and its numbers grew after 1964 in proportion to the number of frank autobiographies by such Hollywood people as Erroll Flynn (My Wicked, Wicked Ways [1960]), Charlie Chaplin (My Autobiography [1964]), Pat O'Brien (The Wind at My Back [1964]), Lita Grey Chaplin (My Life With Chaplin [1966]), David Niven (The Moon's a Balloon [1972]), and Edward G. Robinson (All My Yesterdays [1973]). There was also a raft of sometimes even more explicit biographies and general accounts of Hollywood life: Joe Hyams's Bogie (1966), Garson Ganin's Hollywood (1967), Lee Israel's Miss Tallulah Bankhead (1972), Jane Ellen Wayne's Robert Taylor (1973), Samuel Marx's Mayer and Thalberg: The Make-Believe Saints (1975), David Niven's Bring on the Empty Horses (1975), and Jeffrey Feinman's Hollywood Confidential (1976), just a few examples of the dozens of their sort. And an increased license in all fiction written after 1964 allowed for more revealing and, in some cases, more lurid romans à clef about Hollywood.

This sub-genre has always proved popular with the reading public, no doubt because they sense they are learning the "truth" about famous Hollywood personalities who are but thinly disguised. However, they overlook the fact that, because these are novels, the authors are free to embellish their stories with whatever fictional material they like. In order to capitalize on the public's ignorance, some publishers tout their novels as romans à clef when it is in fact difficult to determine which famous people the book's characters are supposed to be, as is true for Steve Krantz's Laurel Canyon (1979).

Others are less difficult to infer. Film critic Hollis Alpert's Smash (1973) details the filming of A Time For Love (Love Story), written by New York English professor Mike Breed (Eric Segal), by Palestra Pictures (Paramount Studios) under the direction of thirty-five-year-old producer Barry Prinz (Robert Evans) as a vehicle for a star (Ali McGraw) who is his lover. Despite Prinz's wheeling and dealing, which nearly destroys the people involved, the film is an enormous financial success. Famous people are equally obvious in other novels: Grace Kelly in both Diana Carter's Princess (1971) and Peter Evans's Titles (1978), Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in William Woolfolk's The Beautiful Couple (1968), Marlon Brando in David Weiss's Justin Moya (1965), Francis Ford Coppola in George Bellak's Come Jericho (1981), Tallulah Bankhead in Tom E. Huff's Marabelle (1980), and Orson Welles in Richard Karlan's Pageant Faded (1972). These

are but a few examples of the myriad romans à clef of the period.

Marilyn Monroe, because of her hold on the American sexual imagination, has inspired several books since 1964, including Alvah Bessie's The Symbol (1966), William E. Hegner's The Idolaters (1973), and Henry Denker's The Director (1970). The latter also treats a Clark Gable-type male protagonist and the film being made in the novel suggests The Misfits, directed in 1960 by John Huston. Although author Doris Grumbach states in a note appended to her novel, The Missing Person (1981), that her protagonist Franny Fuller "is a portrait, not of a single life but of many lives molded into one, typical of the women America often glorifies and elevates and then leaves suspended in their lonely and destructive fame," there are extremely close parallels in the character to Marilyn Monroe and Frances Farmer.

As in the period before 1964, some authors write autobiographical romans à clef, reaping the benefits of both conventions. They can market their books as novels based on life which will lay bare the facts of the film industry while hiding behind a "fictional" persona. For example, actress Joan Blondell writes of herself in Center Door Fancy (1972) as "Nora Marten," a successful star during Hollywood's golden days who is thrice-married, once to a crooner very much resembling Blondell's ex-husband Dick Powell. In How to Save Your Own Life (1977), Erica Jong sustains the persona of "Isadora Wing" which she established in her 1973 Fear of

Flying. This latest novel, while not a Hollywood Novel per se, does treat Isadora's attempts to get her novel Candida Confesses (Fear of Flying) brought to the screen by a flim-flamming female producer while at the same time she is discovering a new lover, a much younger Hollywood screenwriter.

One of the most painfully revealing novels to combine autobiography and the roman à clef approach is Eleanor Perry's Blue Pages (1979) in which Perry, as screenwriter "Lucia Wade," exposes the traumas of her marriage to the much younger "Vincent Wade" (director Frank Perry) as the two rise from obscurity to become the "hottest" picture-making team in filmdom (the pair in real life created David and Lisa, Last Summer, The Swimmer, and Diary of a Mad Housewife). When he leaves her for a younger woman, Lucia details her long search for renewed happiness and her battle against sexism in the film industry. The novel, which takes its title from those pages on which a final version of a screenplay is written, as well as from the sadness of what is written on the pages of the book itself, uses cinematic narrative techniques by presenting some parts of the story as though they were part of a film script and terms such as "final cut," "montage," "voice over," "fade out," and "dissolve" as chapter titles. Perry's articulate prose, her absolute candor, her wit and lack of egotism make this novel one of the most readable and satisfying (though unsettling) of all Hollywood romans à clef.

Two novels merge autobiography and roman à clef conventions within an historical approach, Mel Tormé's Wynner

(1978) and Bill Mahan's The Boy Who Looked Like Shirley Temple; An Autobiographical Novel of Hollywood In the 1930's (1980). In them, two grown men narrators look back on the Depression when they were pushed into show business careers by stage parents. Tormé's career as a singer and minor film star is told through the persona of "Martin Wynocki," who is separated from his father and taken to Hollywood in the 1930's by his mother. The story of his search for his father is interwoven with that of his career. Mahan, who was a child actor in the "Jones Family" series of films, writes of himself as "Billy Boyce," a member of a strange clan that sought the golden dream of fame in Hollywood between the wars.

Others involved somehow in the film business, like the autobiographical roman à clef authors above, wrote of life in movieland just as had Hollywood personages before 1964. Well-known actresses Mary Astor, Carolyn Jones, Evelyn Keyes, and Fay Baker penned The O'Connors (1964), Twice Upon a Time (1971), I Am a Billboard (1971), and My Darling, Darling Doctors (1975), respectively; while Kid Andrew Cody and Julie Sparrow (1977) draws on the Hollywood experience of its author, actor Tony Curtis. In 144 Piccadilly (1971), director Samuel Fuller, who has a large cult following in England, describes the activities of an American film director, very much like himself, living in England and involved with a band of hippies whose lives are a tangle of violence, sex, and drugs.

A number of screenwriter/novelists have also authored Hollywood Novels since 1964: Stuart Palmer (Rook Takes Knight [1968]), Steve Fisher (The Big Dream [1970]), Max Wilk (Eliminate the Middleman [1974] and The Moving Picture Boys [1978]), Frederic Raphael (April, June and November [1972] and California Time [1975]), William Goldman (Tinsel [1979]), and Norman Panama and Albert E. Lewin (The Glass Bed [1980]), among many others.

Phillip Rock, the son of Joe Rock, Vitagraph actor/producer and founder of Elstree Studios in England, writes about Hollywood of the 1920's in Flickers (1977). Robert P. Eaton, an ex-husband of Lana Turner, obviously incorporated her personality characteristics into the aging and alcoholic sex symbol "Marla Jordon" in his The Body Brokers (1970). And Hollywood gossip columnist Rona Barrett brought Frank Sinatra's wrath upon herself when she painted scarcely concealed portraits of him, his son, and his wife in The Lovo-Maniacs (1970), a novel so tedious and over-blown that not even the colorful Sinatra-act-alike can make it interesting.

After 1964, the roman à clef sub-genre (with its companion convention of the Hollywood-associated author) is second in numbers only to the Hollywood Novel detective sub-genre, a type of novel whose popularity continued after 1963. Carolyn See's three divisions, which were discussed in Chapter Two--the classic puzzle, the comic, and the neo-detective--still apply in these books; but it may be more edifying to discuss

them primarily within two larger classifications: those set in Hollywood in the classic tradition of the sub-genre and those set on location outside of Hollywood. Both types of detective novels reflect the contemporary film industry's makeup and/or manifest cultural changes of the last twenty years as they are seen in Hollywood and in society at large.

In the first group of novels, which are set in Hollywood, there are a few classic puzzle novels that might have been written at anytime during the history of the Hollywood Novel genre. For examples, in Stuart Palmer's Rook Takes Knight (1968), a detective tracks through the sordid Hollywood environment the killer of a former movie starlet's cruel husband in order to clear her name; in Timothy Harris's Good Night and Goodbye (1979), detective Thomas Kyd, in one of a series of books about his exploits, searches for an important missing film script that will provide a clue and battles the Mafia while trying to prove the woman he loves is innocent of murdering a contemptible screenwriter; and in Jeannie Sakol's Hot 30 (1980), a washed-up news reporter seeks to discover if a successful Hollywood gossip columnist committed suicide or was murdered on her thirtieth birthday.

A few classic puzzle novels set within the Hollywood environment use the traditional conventions while reflecting more contemporary themes. For example, the Beverly Hills police detective who solves the murder of a famous studio mogul in E.V. Cunningham's Samantha (1967) is an Oriental (a convention used only once before by Earl Der Biggers and that

film novel, The Black Camel [1929], was set in Honolulu). In Roger Dooley's Flashback (1969), an historical setting, so favored by contemporary Hollywood Novels, of 1958--the period when Confidential magazine was terrorizing Hollywood's famous--is provided as a backdrop for detection as an honest fan magazine reporter tries to prove an aging silent film star committed suicide in order to unveil a past scandal. Two of the principal characters are gay in Paul Monette's The Gold Diggers (1979), an almost gothic story which is set in a long-dead silent film producer's mansion and which depends on dark secrets of Hollywood's past, stolen art work, and murder for a plot; and a transvestite is revealed as the murderer in Velda Johnston's House Above Hollywood (1968). This last novel unfolds from the premise of a young woman's search for answers about the death of her novelist/screenwriter father, a man fairly closely modeled on F. Scott Fitzgerald.

The traditional comic detective novel set in Hollywood is represented by two books, Brock Brower's The Late Great Creature (1972) and Jack Finney's Marion's Wall (1973). In the former, a very black comedy, a Vincent Price-type veteran of horror films in the American-International mold, smothers after being locked in a coffin while participating in a return-from-the-dead promotional scheme for a picture based on Edgar Allen Poe's "The Raven." In the latter, a young married couple solve an ancient Hollywood mystery in order to remove the ghost of a booze-loving, risk-taking Wampus Baby type silent star that has settled in the wife's body.



The neo-detective Hollywood Novel continues to be identifiable, although its major components, psychological overtones and grim, unpleasant violence (as opposed to the sorts of antiseptic and playful murders of the classic puzzle and comic varieties), are so prevalent in contemporary fiction of all sorts that they need not be viewed as exclusively the province of this type of detective fiction. In fact, because they are so widely-used, it is not surprising they are manifested in Hollywood Novels, particularly in the detective types.

A good example of this sort is Dean R. Koontz's Whispers (1980), in which a beautiful and hard-working Hollywood screenwriter believes she has killed a psychopath intent on raping and murdering her; when he returns to attack her again, she must turn to a police detective to resolve the occultism-related mystery. In Pamela Chais's Final Cut (1981), former child star "Buddy Bacall" is now Beverly Hills police detective Bud Bacola, a specialist in crimes involving the film community. When widely-hated and ruthless agent D.P. Koenig is killed, Bud finds who murdered him while coping with disturbing and forgotten memories of Koenig that surface into his consciousness and that are tied in with the car accident which killed Bud's father and ended his own career. In Sabina Thorne's Reruns (1981), when a teenaged child of a movie star is raped and murdered, a housewife to whom she had turned for help decides to track the culprit. Her search takes her to a house in Brentwood, where she

herself had been the abused child of a prominent Hollywood agent years before. The psychological trauma this causes is compounded by the mother's attempts to use the child's murder to boost her sagging film career; thus, there are emotional impediments to the murder's solution, rather than the physical sorts associated with the other two types of detective novels.

Perhaps the most striking of the contemporary neo-detective novels set in Hollywood is Joseph Wambaugh's The Glitter Dome (1981). This novel points up dramatically the contrasts not only between pre-1964 detective novels and their contemporary counterparts but also between the Hollywood of those earlier novels and the present-day city. The basic plot is familiar: when a powerful film mogul is murdered and others on the Los Angeles police force fail to solve the crime, two detectives are assigned the unpleasant task. But there all similarities between this detective novel and those of the past end. These two cops are a far cry from the competent, self-confident, witty (although often sardonic) detectives of the traditional classic puzzle or neo-detective Hollywood Novels. They are crippled by neuroses; one is an alcoholic suffering from impotency and suicidal tendencies, and the other is obsessed and haunted by the mutilation of a young boy. Their search for the killer leads them to the worst and most seamy parts of Hollywood, where they witness the vilest sorts of human behavior. While following clues that lead to child pornography and "snuff" films, they are thrown into the

company of male "models," transsexuals, massage parlor employees, all-night roller skaters, habitués of a disco known as "The Glitter Dome," and others in a wide array of human flotsam and jetsam. Here is Hollywood of the 1980's in all its most basic unpleasantness and little of substance actually "glitters."

The reality of contemporary Hollywood, that is, what it has become, as demonstrated by the Wambaugh novel, owes in part to the gradual but continual movement of filmmaking after the 1950's away from Hollywood per se. And that movement is reflected in the large numbers of detective novels about filmmaking which are set on location. Some treat location filming done in the United States, as does The Black Glass City (1965), one in the Peter Styles detective series by Judson Philips. In it, Styles is called by an old friend to restore calm to location filming being done at his Connecticut estate; the movie company there is out of control, making and breaking its own rules, establishing its own moralities, and even causing death. In David Snell's Lights . . . Camera . . . Murder (1979), a young beginning actor who has landed a part in a movie being shot in New York City must turn detective when he is hired to be the star's bodyguard but fails in his task. In Gwen Davis's The Aristocrats (1977), a Beverly Hills police detective finds clues in a murder investigation that lead to a Hollywood film company on location in a state park near Monterey for the making of a disaster film. Their commingling in the park with a meta-

physical meditation society holding its annual convention creates a uniquely 1970-ish situation.

But picture-making on location moved to areas outside the United States early on in the exodus from Hollywood, as can be inferred from the myriad Hollywood Novels, including some in the detective sub-genre, about such filming or about American actors who work in the film industries of other countries. In The Last One Kills (1969) by Whit Masterson (a pseudonym for prolific detective writers Bob Wade and Bill Miller), a detective is sent to Mexico by his superior under the guise of being a film actor for the location filming of a picture; he hopes to find there a missing witness to a gangland slaying whose testimony could indict a southern California crime don. In Peter Townend's Zoom! (1972), Rome and Costa Smeralda are the setting as one-eyed photographer/detective Philip Quest becomes embroiled in murder, kidnapping, and other adventures that surround the marriage of the star of Spaghetti Westerns--one of the chief sorts of international filmmaking of the 1960's and 1970's done in Italy and using American actors--and a wealthy Texan's daughter. An American child star films in London in Marian Babson's Murder, Murder, Little Star (1980). And a film being shot in Delhi features an American actress whose kidnapped daughter must be found in Mourning in Raga (1970) by Ellis Peters (a pseudonym for Edith Pargeter).

Novels about filmmaking by Americans on location abroad seemed naturally to intersect with a theme of the last twenty

years whose popularity is so wide-spread in contemporary fiction that it is almost impossible to describe--espionage, a motif born of the Cold War and sustained, it seems indefinitely, by the reading public's fascination for "spies." For example, a Vietnam veteran sent to locate a director who disappeared from a location-finding flight near the Albanian border finds himself embroiled in espionage in Helen Nielsen's Shot on Location (1971). In Laurence Snelling's The Heresy (1973), mystery still surrounds the life of an American novelist who worked for the French underground during WWII; when an American film company tries to film this part of his life on location in Europe, they encounter murder and find an old political conspiracy is still alive. And with international politics comes terrorism; Joseph Di Mona's To The Eagle's Nest (1980) features an Academy Award-winning American director, a matinee idol, and a starlet on location in Germany to film The Secret Life of Hitler, all of whom are kidnapped by the Baader-Meinhoff gang at the instigation of a neo-Nazi group unfriendly to the film. Looking back from the vantage point of this book, we can see the long distance the sub-genre has come, both physically and psychologically, from those detective novels cozily set in a Hollywood studio or elsewhere within the film capital itself.

Location novels about American film companies cut across not only detective novels but also every other sub-genre of the Hollywood Novel and find settings all over the world. For examples, Rome, Greece, Mexico, and a Mediterranean is-

land provide locations for film companies in William Denby's The Catacombs (1965), Wirt Williams's The Trojans (1966), Burt Hirschfeld's Acapulco (1971), and Rosemary Rogers's The Crowd Pleasers (1978). Although not strictly a location novel, William K. Zinsser's The Paradise Bit (1967) humorously shows the far-flung international influence of Hollywood's methods. In it, a Hollywood publicity team descends on a small group of South Pacific islands to promote the world premiere of Desert Island For Two, a film starring Moona Marone, by awarding an island called "Moona-Moona" to the winners of a studio-sponsored contest back in the States. The natives and the island's British population join forces to stop tourism resulting from the unwanted publicity. The exotic locations in these novels enhance the already seemingly glamorous filmmaking process and serve, in a sense, to replace the environment that Hollywood itself provided for earlier novels in pre-location filming days.

Another international manifestation in Hollywood Novels after 1963 is the film festival setting in a foreign country. Bart Spicer's Festival (1970), Irwin Shaw's Evening in Byzantium (1973), and Robert Sydney Hopkins's Riviera: A Novel About the Cannes Film Festival (1980) treat the Cannes Film Festival and have as their protagonists Americans involved with Hollywood--a public relations man, a producer, and a talent scout, respectively--who undergo revelations, both personal and professional, during the event. International politics also figure in the Spicer novel as the son of

the protagonist becomes part of a group of rebellious students who disrupt the festival by protesting against bourgeois Western films and by trying to win the top prize for the Communist entry directed by a young Czech. David Stacton's Old Acquaintance (1964) is set at the fictional Mondorf-les-Bains Film festival and mixes homosexual love with festival politics.

Two other film festival novels, Diane Cilento's 1967 The Manipulator (set in Acapulco) and Geoffrey Bocca's 1974 Nadine (set in part at Cannes), treat exclusively characters from the film industries of other countries, Great Britain and France, respectively. These novels represent a type which sprang up after 1964 as a companion to the Hollywood Novel--novels about foreign cinema written in English and usually published in the United States. They were virtually non-existent before the advent of location filmmaking and the growing influence of films from other nations. There had been earlier novels, such as Edward Stilgebauer's The Star of Hollywood (1929), Vicki Baum's Falling Star (1934), and Maurice Dekobra's The Madonna in Hollywood (1945), that were first published in another tongue (here the first two in German and the last in French) and then translated into English. But their settings were in the United States and the Hollywood film industry was featured. Francoise Sagan's The Heart-Keeper (1968) is a contemporary example of this sort. In the period after 1964, foreign authors wrote about international filmmaking in English or in their own lan-

guages, with translated editions to be sold in this country. Georges Simenon's Maigret's Pickpocket (1967), one of a series about Chief Inspector Maigret of the Paris police translated by Nigel Ryan, is a primary example; its story involves murder in the Paris film colony.

By far the largest group of novels in the international film novel genre were originally written in English, usually either by Britons or Americans, and mostly published in this country or released simultaneously by American and British publishers. Consequently, a great many are set in the British film industry or have characters connected with that industry, for examples: Patricia Moyes's Falling Star (1964), A Part For a Policeman (1970) by John Creasey (pseudonym for Jeremy York), The Distant Laughter (1972) by British actor, screenwriter, producer, and director Bryan Forbes, and Diana Hammond's Sweet Lies (1979). These titles represent only a few of the many novels of this type.

The film industries of Israel, Italy, France, Denmark, and India are featured in Henry Klinger's Lust For Murder (1966), Julia Markus's La Mora (1976), Delores Palà's Trumpet For a Walled City (1974), Monica Stirling's The Summer of a Dormouse (1967), and H.R.F. Keating's Filmi, Filmi, Inspector Ghote (1977), respectively. The last is one of a series about Bombay CID employee Inspector Ghote, who in this story solves a murder which takes place during the filming of a garbled version of MacBeth (featuring "Maqbet" and "Maqduv") at the Talkieston Studios in India's film capital Bollywood.



This Asian version of the American film capital is populated by the old Hollywood character stereotypes: gossip columnists, famous screen villains, stand-ins, a fading star, etc., who all seem as though they have been imported wholesale from California to India, made up as natives, and dressed in saris and Nehru jackets.

This novel is the strongest argument to support my contention that the location/international film novel genre flowed into the vacuum left when American filmmaking drifted away from Hollywood and fiction about it fell off. The authors of these books are still trying to reach the same sorts of audiences as those for the traditional Hollywood Novels, a public which responds to the associations of fame, glamour, youthfulness, sexuality, etc. that are attached to filmmaking. But the Hollywood of old is gone and what was once associated with it must now be found elsewhere--in the film industries of other countries if necessary, even in Bollywood, India. In terms of its numbers, the location/international film novel genre is considerably larger than that of the roman à clef and detective sub-genres, the two strongest among the Hollywood Novel genre; it cannot be ignored as a powerful force after 1964 amongst all novels written about filmmaking, whether set in Hollywood or elsewhere.

Developing simultaneously with the location/international film novel genre and sometimes overlapping with it was a sub-genre of Hollywood Novels and other novels about filmmaking that also resulted from the trend away from Hollywood as

a film center but which tried, nonetheless, to capitalize on the associations of the filmmaking industry to create interest and draw readers in. These novels often featured a protagonist with some connection to the film world who becomes involved in a plot unrelated to the industry so that his or her vocation, while serving as a springboard into the narrative, has little to do with the story as it unfolds.

Many of these novels, in which the protagonist's connection to filmmaking is only tangential, involve political situations and espionage, as would be expected in light of the large numbers of international film novels. For examples, two film actors become embroiled in world politics in Roderick MacLeish's The Man Who Wasn't There (1976) and William M. Green's Spencer's Bag (1971). In the former, Palestinian terrorists are plotting to control the actor's mind and drive him insane so he will kill his own son; and in the latter, the star is swept into intrigue as he acts as a courier for the Atomic Energy Commission and takes a case of plutonium for peaceful purposes to a nuclear reactor in an emerging African republic. In neither, is their association with film important. In Howard Rigsby's Calliope Reef (1967), a successful film actress who is seeking solitude and sanctuary at a northern California coastal inn is caught up in an international political plot which only the C.I.A. can quell. Her Hollywood career is unimportant to the plot, except that it makes her a more glamorous heroine. In Ross Thomas's The Singapore Wink (1969), a former movie stunt man

and a retired British intelligence agent are called away from their antique shop in Hollywood and dispatched to Singapore to search for a missing spy. And in Michael Mewshaw's Land Without Shadow (1979), an art director for a film on location in Africa must decide whether to stay out of a country's domestic affairs when he discovers that it is deliberately starving some of its citizens.

Many of these political and espionage novels which are peripherally related to filmmaking feature writers. In Arthur Arent's Gravedigger's Funeral (1967), when a successful novelist/screenwriter returns to Frankfurt to locate a brother who stayed in Germany during the war when other family members fled, he becomes involved with a sinister neo-Nazi organization. Another screenwriter, in Nigel Balchin's In the Absence of Mrs. Peterson (1966), is tricked into accompanying to Yugoslavia a woman who hopes to rescue her lover, a Communist Party member in disfavor. Still another novelist, in Tunsia to write a script for a location film, becomes so entrapped by East-West politics and other mysterious goings-on that he loses touch with his past and with conventional ethics and regresses into a sort of primitivism in Patricia Highsmith's The Tremor of Forgery (1969).

In some of these novels, particularly in the MacLeish, Green, and Rigsby books, the film-associated people could be replaced by characters from any other walk of life. Their film work is important only in that it calls up interesting associations in the mind of the reader and, therefore, makes

them more appealing characters and the novels more intriguing. In other cases, the vocation is somewhat more important. In the Thomas book, the protagonist's movie stunt training makes him a more vigorous and agile rescuer; the art director of Mewshaw's novel is perhaps more sensitive to the world around him and, therefore, more quickly aware of the starving natives' plight. Screenwriters are used in these, and other novels no doubt, because they, too, are considered to be sensitive and intelligent and, most importantly, perceptive and observant; and they are able to articulately report what they observe, moreover, and so make good protagonists or narrators.

Often American political situations are central to books which use Hollywood or film-related characters only as a method of luring readers. For example, in David Chandler's The Ramsden Case (1967), a playwright/screenwriter who is weary of Hollywood and who doubts his own abilities renews himself and his values by returning to his hometown to see that the killer of four civil rights workers is brought to justice. Mickey Ziffren's A Political Affair (1979) details the political dirty tricks and sexual escapades that accompany the senatorial campaign of a gorgeous former Hollywood film star who is asked by her friend the President to run against a conservative politician with whom she once had an affair. And a faded western movie star forms a para-military group, "the Fourth of July Association," in an effort to overthrow the government and establish a dictatorship in

Black Work (1976) by Macdowell Frederics (a pseudonym for Richard Frede).

Here again, these novels seem to draw their interest from the flimsiest sorts of associations with Hollywood and filmmaking; and this is a "gimmick" used not just with political themes, either international or domestic. Novels of all persuasions have been written employing this same gimmick. For example, in J. F. Burke's detective novel, Location Shots (1974), despite the suggestions of the title and the fact that the crimes are solved by some footage shot on location in New York City for the 1971 film The Panic in Needle Park, there is nothing in the book about filmmaking and no character is associated with filmmaking in even the remotest sense. The resolution provided by the film is the most gratuitous of denouements and is clumsily tacked on to the novel. Hollywood associations are equally tenuous in Marc Lovell's The Ghost of Megan (1968), which takes a Hollywood film actress, deposits her in Wales, and creates a gothic mystery around her that is totally unrelated to filmmaking or to her skills as an actress. A get-rich-quick scheme involving diving for gold in Florida in Sloan Wilson's Janus Island (1967) is made more interesting by the inclusion of a movie company used to divert attention from the diving.

These are not Hollywood Novels; they are not location/international film novels; they are not even about filmmaking. But by their inclusion of characters or situations connected in some way to Hollywood or filmmaking they

draw on the popularity of the novels that are legitimately and completely about those things.

Another strong trend found in Hollywood Novels of the late 1960's and 1970's was the inclusion of contemporary life-styles, fads, problems, and concerns in what appears to be an effort to create sensation, or at least to stimulate interest. For example, Alfred Hayes's The End of Me (1968) manifests the conflict of generations so talked about at the time of its publication in the late 1960's by describing the exploits of a fifty-year-old Hollywood screenwriter who falls in with some free-wheeling, materialistic, and cruel young people in New York. Another screenwriter in Bruce Jay Friedman's About Harry Towns (1974), though successful, can't create a happy personal life for himself; because his marriage fails and he is unable to cope with the deaths of his parents and his own illness, he develops an expensive cocaine habit. In response to increased use in society at large, drugs became prominent props in other novels related to film. A scriptwriter in Bernard Wolfe's Logan's Gone (1974) becomes entangled with a campus radical and a Viet Nam veteran in a web of drugs, sex, and revolutionary politics. In Robert Stone Pryor's Cold Iron (1970), heavy drug use is a way of life for a young female screenwriter and her circle of "with-it" friends, including a rock musician lover who at concerts disrobes and shouts obscenities à la Jim Morrison.

Contemporary themes find play in other novels, too, such as Gavin Lambert's The Goodby People (1971). In it, two

former movie queens represent the old traditional Hollywood and a young male drop-out the contemporary counterculture or hippie element as the two life styles meet. A young woman who pretends to be a successful movie actress but who, in reality, is the mistress of a cruel film director and a porno film star are two film-associated types among an assortment of southern California "beach people" who are featured in William Murray's The Sweet Ride (1967). And a number of contemporary trends come together in Ron Kurz's Black Rococo (1975). Here, the protagonist manages a big city theater that he has watched decline from its early gentility to a porno palace to a "Blaxploitation" emporium. He juggles his romance with a very 1970-ish ecology nut with his plans for "Superdude Day" at the theater, a time when a black Hollywood sensation--"Superdude"--will be at the theater in person. Another convention of the period is honored as the protagonist flees the riot and fire that ensue at the event and goes on the road to establish a new identity for himself.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's (at the height of the counterculture movement), unconventional and contemporary types of non-Hollywood filmmakers flourished, and are focused on in three novels of that period. In Jack Matthews's Pictures of the Journey Back (1973), a tough old cowboy rancher drives his hippie daughter across the plains to the deathbed of her mother; in the pick-up truck with them is her avant-garde filmmaker lover who is recording the event. His presence calls up a number of conflicts--generational, life

style, sexual--in a narrative that depicts the action as though it were being filmed. Another filmmaker in the same vein is drawn into intrigue in Joseph McElroy's Lookout Cartridge (1974). In Noel B. Gerson's The Golden Ghetto (1969), the fast-lane life of a New York pop artist and underground filmmaker is contrasted with that of a conservative and conventional wealthy businessman he hopes will finance a film.

The 1960's and 1970's were a time when so-called "alternative life styles" began to surface and find acceptance. A chief one among those was homosexuality, so it is no surprise that gay Hollywood Novels and novels about filmmaking began to find publishers and readers. Two of these, both by Paul Monette, portray the homosexual lifestyle in a relatively positive light; The Gold Diggers (1979) is a gothic murder/detective novel set in contemporary Hollywood and treating intrigue from the movieland of yesteryear, and The Long Shot (1981) is a comic detective novel involving the murder of a macho, but very gay, Hollywood film star. David Stacton's treatment of homosexuality in Old Acquaintance (1964) is bittersweet; in this book, an aging novelist very much resembling Somerset Maugham is serving as a film festival judge; the awards will be presented by a singer and movie star in the Marlene Dietrich mold. The novelist's lover and a member of the movie star's staff fall in love, resulting in personal problems for all four. And a Hollywood producer is destroyed when he fails to conceal his gayness in Robert



Granit's Another Runner in the Night (1981), a dark picture of the impact homosexuality can have on an individual who can't control his fears and anger.

The rise of feminism in our contemporary culture has not gone unnoticed by authors writing about Hollywood, filmmaking, and characters involved in film. Women in the first decades of Hollywood Novels were, with few notable exceptions, film actresses, whose problems--small or large--were played out in conjunction with or in subordination to their fictional male counterparts. In the most prolific sub-genre, the detective novel, they were usually murder victims in the form of prima donna film stars or dispensable studio extras or script girls. Even women sleuths were hard to come by, Stuart Palmer's Hildegard Withers being the primary exception. The female protagonists of the many earlier romantic Hollywood Novels sought homes, husbands, and children rather than professional careers and often found the latter was so unsatisfying as to bring about their retirement from films altogether. Although Hollywood has always boasted many women among its screenwriters and film technicians (costumers, editors, make-up artists, etc.), very few have found their way into Hollywood Novels, screenwriters Kit Sargent of Budd Schulberg's What Makes Sammy Run? (1941) and Justine Marvel of Noel Clad's Love and Money (1959) being exceptions (although the portrait of the latter as a boozing lesbian is by no means complimentary).

Women characters in Hollywood Novels came into their own

particularly in the 1970's, although a relatively few novels continued to trade on the worst models of the past for their stereotypes. For example, Thomas Tryon's Crowned Heads (1976) features two film stars, Fedora--"The Perfect Work of Art"--and Lorna--"The All-American Cookie"--who represent two extremes in Hollywood movie stars: the beautiful, unflawed, aloof, and successful mannequin and the vulnerable, unstable, unsuccessful sex object. The portraits of these rather uninteresting "non-women" may, in part, be forgiven because Tryon's novel purports to be historical and, therefore, can be expected to depend on stereotypes.

Among the depictions of women of achievement and competence in contemporary Hollywood Novels, there are few notable portraits of successful actresses, except for that of a street kid who scrambled her way to Oscar-winning stardom in Eric Van Lustbader's Sirens (1981). Instead, the focus is on women holding filmmaking-related positions, jobs unheard of for them in earlier Hollywood Novels. Screenwriter Harriet Frank, Jr.'s Special Effects (1979) features a Hollywood story editor who handles not only her job with aplomb but also raises and counsels her children on her own, has an affair with a doctor, gives advice and comfort to her studio co-workers who fear the loss of their jobs, and, in general, offers reassurance to others enduring accidents, unhappy love affairs, and other problems. She is a woman in complete control. Several latter day heroines are screenwriters in Dean R. Koontz's Whispers (1980), Harold Robbins's The Lonely

Lady (1976), and Gael Greene's Blue Skies, No Candy (1976). In a lively contrast to the romance genre, the last book portrays a professionally successful and happily-married woman who finds she needs more to fulfill her life, more sex that is; and she finds it in Paris and Cannes. For the heroines of contemporary Hollywood Novels are sexually liberated indeed. In Karen Stabiner's Limited Engagements (1979), a woman who has progressed up the ladder from script girl to television director and who also wishes to direct a film negotiates for the option on a feminist novel, a prop not possible even ten years before the time of the book's publication.

In the 1970's and 1980's film world, women directors like Joan Micklin Silver, Claudia Weill, Elaine May, Jane Wagner, and Joan Tewkesbury are relatively commonplace, unlike their cohorts, such as Frances Marion, in earlier decades; and so they find a place in contemporary Hollywood Novels. Annabel Davis-Goff's Night Tennis (1978) shows the reader a forty-three-year-old film director who finds the movie industry tawdry and her marriage to an otherwise capable man sexually unsatisfying; while filming a picture in London, she comes to terms with her sexual and emotional needs during an affair with a lover twenty-three years younger, a convention formerly reserved only for male protagonists. A brash director in John Ives's The Marchand Woman (1979) joins forces with a macho mercenary to find her son who has been kidnapped by terrorists and the unlikely couple

succeed, falling in love at the same time. Larry McMurtry's Somebody's Darling (1978) details the early, modest directing efforts that propel a thirty-seven-year-old woman into professional filmmaking. It is obvious, too, from these novels, that older and more mature heroines are seen as desirable and interesting, a dramatic change from the emphasis on young starlets and sex queens and from the suggestions that female film stars are washed-up in their thirties in earlier Hollywood Novels.

In Sandra Hochman's Happiness is Too Much Trouble (1976), a novel which lays bare a computerized 1970's Hollywood where consultants, accountants, and others serve up a product to a corporation of stockholders, an interesting contrast with the earlier novels which feature poorly-educated and family-oriented Jewish moguls is struck. Here, a female lawyer and writer of pornographic comedy, through an ironic set of circumstances and because it is believed she can be controlled as a token woman, is computer-chosen to head the world's largest film studio. Flashbacks show her chaotic life, her two husbands, and her many lovers. In movieland, the office of studio head is the top of the ladder; and in contemporary Hollywood Novels, it's possible for a woman to occupy that rung.

Certainly women are in evidence in contemporary Hollywood Novels and novels about filmmaking, just as they emerge in greater numbers in all contemporary fiction and find larger, more significant roles. As they developed from the

flat, one-dimensional characters of earlier decades and their feelings and needs became more central to the stories at hand, they took on traits once only the province of male characters: strength, intelligence, ability, wit, etc. But they also were allowed to be fleshed out psychologically so that problems, neuroses, and even psychoses could be portrayed in female film-associated characters as well.

These unfortunate women characters cover the range in Hollywood Novels and film novels in general from stars to film historians. Doris Grumbach's portrait of movie queen Franny Fuller in The Missing Person (1981) shows a woman so far removed from the reality of life that she alternates between long periods of sleeplessness and dead sleep, between starvation and junk food binges, and between periods of heavy drug use and semi-productive work. She is missing from "the long catalogue of human beings" so that her ultimate death is ignored and treated as yet another periodic disappearance. In Joan Didion's Play It As It Lays (1970), Maria Wyeth is a former fashion model and star of cult films directed by her husband. The reader participates in her psychic disintegration as she drives the Los Angeles freeways trying to escape from her memories of a traumatic abortion and as she seeks solace and gives it in her own pathetic way to other emotionally-trapped Hollywood personages. R.V. Cassill's Flame (1980) chronicles the rise and fall of an Oscar-winning star whose temper and neurotic scramble for fame cost her her career, her looks, her family, and her lovers. After under-

playing herself and depending on men all her life, especially during her marriage to a cartoon producer, the protagonist in Sandra Harmon's A Girl Like Me (1975) writes an article about the plight of women, is recruited by a well-known female producer to write a screenplay based on it, and finds success on her own at last; however, her triumph is dimmed by the knowledge that neurotic memories of her father's suicide will prevent her long-term happiness. And Katie in Brad Solomon's Jake & Katie (1979) turns Jake's faltering film career around dramatically by buying off, browbeating, threatening, and sleeping with various powerful Hollywood people; her final descent into homicidal psychosis is a terrifying one.

One other book with a principal female interest who is crippled by neurosis is feminist critic and film historian Joan Mellen's Natural Tendencies (1981); although not set in Hollywood, it treats international filmmaking, one of the common narrative threads of contemporary film novels. In it, a Jewish and Bronx-born film scholar and university professor living in Japan as a visiting scholar has an affair with a bi-sexual Japanese film producer. Her lack of confidence and self-worth keep her clinging to the relationship until his preference for homosexuality makes clear to her it is over.

Concurrent with but certainly not dependent on the rise of women to principal places in Hollywood Novels was an increased emphasis on sexual matters and a greater license concerning types of sexual situations that could be included. At the time that Carolyn See's dissertation was completed,

1963, determining whether books and other printed materials were pornographic was carried out by law and was an important matter in writing and publishing. See herself had recently served as an expert witness at a pornography trial. In the past twenty years, however, what constitutes "pornography" has gradually ceased to be discussed; and there seem to be no limits on what sorts of sexual matters can be portrayed or what kinds of materials can be printed, sold, and sent through the mail (or seen in films or on cable television for that matter).

Attitudes changed rapidly. In the October 1, 1959, issue of Library Journal, Riva T. Bresler, who identified herself as the principal librarian in the fiction department of the Los Angeles Public Library, wrote this in a review of The Sins of Phillip Fleming: A Compelling Novel of a Man's Intimate Problem (1959), a Hollywood Novel by Irving Wallace:

Here is another story of marital infidelity, told in a manner as obvious as the title. Fleming, a Hollywood writer between assignments, in the usual throes of domestic unhappiness, is attracted to the young widow who buys his house. The book describes the week in which he attempts to have an affair--with the lady a willing participant--but finds himself unable to consummate the act. (Rev. note: I'm sorry if this is an offensive summary--this is what the book is about.) As a clinical study, author Wallace . . . should have written this as nonfiction for the plain-wrapper treatment. As a novel, its only virtue is to point out, by comparison, the true passion, compre-

hension, and poetry of D.H. Lawrence.<sup>3</sup>

Less than ten years later in the same publication, reviewers, all librarians writing mostly for other librarians, handle without seeming to flinch not only impotence in Hollywood Novels but also incest, rape, gang rape, orgies, nymphomania, homosexuality, transvestitism, female orgasm, sex change operations, sadomasochism, and any number of individual sexual preferences and/or perversions. From my own research and reading of Library Journal and other reviewing services, I know that in contemporary fiction of all sorts, there is little restraint concerning sexual activities; using the unreal, fantastical environment of Hollywood against which to set pornography or "semi-pornography," as Carolyn See terms it, as was done in earlier Hollywood Novels is no longer necessary. Using that environment, however, may enhance the sexual material because, in general, the film industry is still perceived as somehow more wicked and decadent than the rest of society. The titles of some novels, however--Robert P. Eaton's The Body Brokers (1970), Rona Barrett's The Lovo-Maniacs (1972), and Jacqueline Susann's The Love Machine (1969), among others--seem to promise pornographic sexual subjects and treatments that are not delivered.

Pornographic films themselves have figured in Hollywood

<sup>3</sup>Riva T. Bresler, rev. of The Sins of Phillip Fleming: A Compelling Novel of a Man's Intimate Problem, by Irving Wallace, Library Journal, 1 Oct. 1959, p. 3060.



Novels since the 1930's, usually peripherally as a source for blackmail in the detective sub-genre. They become more prominent in two later novels, Max Wilk's Eliminate the Middleman (1974) and Terry Southern's fantastical Blue Movie (1970). In the former, a Hollywood television producer in need of money uses for blackmail some artfully done orgy films starring unknowing members of a profitable, corrupt Greek/American politician's and businessman's cartel. In the latter, a serious film director makes an "art" porno film in Liechtenstein to be shown there exclusively for ten years in order to increase tourism. But the film, starring several prominent Hollywood types performing all the possible sexual acts, is captured by local clergy and removed to the Vatican for private showings there. Porno film actors also serve as characters in Norman Spinrad's Passing Through the Flame (1975).

But beyond the mere handling of pornography itself in the novels, many Hollywood Novels and novels about characters involved in filmmaking deal with subjects that either would have been forbidden in Hollywood Novels of the past or would have caused them to be deemed "semi-pornography" or "pornography": incest in both Brad Solomon's The Gone Man (1977) and Robert Watson's Lily Lang (1977); exhibitionism (on the part of a starlet's baseball player husband) in Norman Keifetz's The Sensation (1975); deranged sexual fantasies in Joyce Eliason's Laid Out (1976); a plethora of sexual problems, including premature ejaculation, impotency, and

insatiability in Irving Wallace's The Fan Club (1974); and bestiality in Joanna Barnes's The Deceivers (1970).

It is possible, I believe, to see the influence of the Hollywood setting on many of these explicit novels. For example, the frustrated husband with a frigid wife in William Hanley's fantastical Blue Dreams: or The End of Romance and the Continued Pursuit of Happiness (1971) is introduced by a Hollywood movie star, presumably because she would know more about such things than the ordinary being, to acting out his erotic dreams, an activity that leads to sexual adventure, orgies, and finally sex therapy in a mental hospital for him. One can also infer that Hollywood personages are infinitely more sexually capable from Paul Rosner's The Princess and the Goblin (1966), in which there is mention of eight and a half orgasms during a particularly ecstatic lovemaking by a screenwriter and an aspiring starlet, a description leaving the reader puzzling over the remaining half. In Judy Feiffer's A Hot Property (1973), retired movie sex queen Faye Cassidy is able to turn her memories of lovemaking in the sexually permissive Hollywood environment into a bestselling novel titled The Big Bed. The publishers of Feiffer's sexual fantasy note that the author has worked as a production executive with Warner Brothers, implying that she should know firsthand of the film capital's sexual offerings.

Three other novels bear mentioning because they are primary examples in the genre of the qualities, now taken for granted, that would have earned them the description of

"pornographic" twenty years ago. Two of them, Peter Evans's Titles (1978) and Geoffrey Bocca's Nadine (1974), are set in international filmmaking circles. The former chronicles a thinly-veiled Grace Kelly through an amazing number of promiscuous and random sexual acts until she is more or less "bought" as the bride of a Mediterranean principality monarch. The latter, set at the Cannes festival, in Paris, and in Algiers and dealing with a character who eventually emigrates to Hollywood, documents the most sadistic and sexually perverted acts that presumably the author was capable of gathering together. But by all reckoning, actress Carolyn Jones's Twice Upon a Time (1971) must break all records in Hollywood Novels for numbers of sexual acts possible within the covers of one book. The author shows an absolute obsession for writing about the female orgasm or its lack; she seems to depend on the reader's belief that Hollywood is indeed a place where anything can happen as she uses as the set piece of the novel the most extraordinary (if not impossible) orgy that seems concocted out of the stuff of extremely juvenile sexual fantasies.

It is, however, important to note that this novel, as well as those by Joanna Barnes (The Deceivers [1970]) and Judy Feiffer (A Hot Property [1973]), are among the first of the sexually-oriented Hollywood Novels to attempt to describe sex from the woman's point of view, a convention that accompanied the rise of feminism and the prominent use of female characters in popular fiction.

The use of Hollywood as a setting for some of the more outlandish sexually-oriented books may reflect a general feeling about the Hollywood environment, an environment that Edmund Wilson earlier tagged as exhibiting "goofy unreality." Carolyn See has shown how thoroughly this characteristic permeates the first decades of fiction about Hollywood and how it encourages writers to select the film capital as a setting. And one can infer from the contemporary novels set in Hollywood that "goofy unreality" is still a powerful force, although the term itself seems now somewhat out-of-date and stilted. It means, briefly, that anything is possible in the Hollywood atmosphere and that any sort of behavior is tolerated and even encouraged there. The characters and plots of contemporary Hollywood Novels suggest that authors are still drawn to Hollywood as a subject because of this atmosphere.

For example, Hollywood creates the perfect environment for the fantastical sex change and will contestation scheme of Gore Vidal's Myra Breckenridge (1968), a novel that, in turn, mercilessly satirizes all aspects of Hollywood. Only in Hollywood could a seminary student's thesis be purchased by a producer who hopes to turn it into a Biblical epic as a vehicle for the studio's hottest sex symbol; the novel is Howard Singer's The Devil and Henry Raftin (1967), and it satirizes Hollywood's tendency to tamper with the historical or probable in order to create films attractive to a rather uninformed public. It often seems as though the lack of

reality or rather the particular brand of reality at work in Hollywood has caused the filmmakers to suspend the boundaries of reality in history, science, and simple common sense.

In the Hollywood of screenwriter George Baxt's The Neon Graveyard (1979), a retired sex goddess in the vein of Mae West, who lives in a pink, heart-shaped mansion with an extremely intelligent gorilla named Irving, hardly seems unusual at all. A Hollywood screenwriter in Ray Russell's black humor novel, The Colony (1969), creates scripts such as a rock version of Remembrance of Things Past and a treatment of Tamerlane for Robert Goulet; in movieland, it seems there are no standards about what is probable, realistic, or tasteful. It is this tolerance for the bizarre which has attracted to the film capital eccentrics who, though they blend in in Hollywood, would be tremendously out of place in a normal environment. For example, the letter-writing protagonist in F.P. Tullius's 1971 Out of the Death Bag in West Hollywood (first published in sections during 1966-1967 in The New Yorker) is obviously drawn to the unreality of Hollywood and actually feeds off it for antic behavior to report to a psychology professor back east: dressing up in a frog costume, plunging his car through a movie set, sleeping in a coffin, etc.

Although they are the most numerous of the Hollywood Novels demonstrating the environment's bizarreness, the humorous and satiric novels are not the only ones which play on this theme. There are several in a more serious, even dark-

er, vein. Francoise Sagan's 1968 The Heart-Keeper (which was published in France as Le Garde du Coeur and translated into English by Robert Westhoff) features an aging Hollywood film star turned scriptwriter whose kindness towards an odd Los Angeles hippie high on LSD who nearly runs over her brings about an obsessive and murderous devotion from him that nearly wrecks her life. And a macabre explanation for the controversial deaths and disappearances of major Hollywood stars--characters resembling Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, and others--is provided in Jonathon Fast's The Inner Circle (1979). A powerful group, "The Inner Circle," has, since the film industry took root in the strangely unreal environment of Hollywood in the teens, been providing fresh human flesh every ten years to appease a Mexican panther god.

It may be possible to assert that the unreality associated with Hollywood and spilling over into the filmmaking industry in general attracted many contemporary novelists who were writing experimental fiction to set stories there to accentuate their unreality or even surrealism more fully. When a writer of this type of fiction uses this setting, an environment where illusion and reality are indistinguishable both in the lives of the characters and in the products they are involved in creating, his job is made easier because a film industry setting in any novel, conventional or unconventional, indicates to the reader that he should suspend his disbelief as it relates to what is real and unreal.

Some of the Hollywood Novels in this vein merely use

experimental narrative techniques within the Hollywood setting and others capitalize on actual film conventions to tell their stories. In the first group are James Sherwood's 1966 Stradella (the story of a naive young man's dogged faithfulness to an aging film actress who badly mistreats him), George Axelrod's 1971 Where Am I Now--When I Need Me? (the story, told in an extended suicide note, of a creative writing teacher's journey to Hollywood with his ex-prostitute student who writes an amateurish novel titled Bedroom that becomes an Academy Award-winning movie), and Edwin Corley's Farewell, My Slightly Tarnished Hero (1971). In this last novel, the author distorts time to return to the 1950's to associate with the subject of his novel, a very thinly concealed James Dean; he even rides along on the motorcycle trip during which the protagonist is killed, returning to the present to write a screenplay about his experiences.

The second group can be understood by examining two books. Frederic Raphael's novel, California Time (1975), deposits a British director in Hollywood where he will presumably work on a film. After he arrives in that environment, the conventional narration gives way to a tangled web of flashbacks and monologues approaching stream-of-consciousness to suggest his unreal experiences there. The novel's dream-like nature makes it impossible to discern, despite the ongoing comments by the author on his intentions, if the protagonist is actually living out what is described, for example, the murder of a bit part porno film actress. In

addition, there is a great deal of syntax manipulation and word play (wealthy people are described as living "chic-to-chic" and middled-aged men as "packing a paunch"). I believe Raphael's experiences as a screenwriter (for Darling, Two For the Road, Far From the Madding Crowd, etc.) greatly influenced the almost cinematic effect the book creates overall.

Robert Watson's Lily Lang (1977) is equally cinematic in its treatment of a filmmaker, who is often compared to Ingmar Bergman, and the relationship he has with his sister whom he directs in films. Those films, which are highly autobiographical attempts to work out complex relationships between family members (a stage mother who may be a murderess, a passive father, a sister for whom he feels sexual attraction), are presented as scenarios. They precede narrative sections of the book and have symbolic value in terms of the action that is presumed to be real. This is a difficult matter to discern, however, because the reader is never certain if the films are describing reality or if the narrative--or presumed "real"--sections are.

As might be expected in fiction set in the illusion-creating film industry, the search for reality is common in conventionally-written Hollywood Novels also; and it takes two major forms. One type of novel describes an uncovering or stripping awaying of an image to reveal a character's true nature. The other chronicles a protagonist's search for his own real identity, a sort of turning inward of the journey that was portrayed in earlier Hollywood Novels.



There are several key examples of the first type. In Irving Wallace's The Fan Club (1974), four emotionally unstable and sexually inadequate men kidnap a sexy movie queen, whom they call "The Love Goddess." Their plan is to keep her hidden in a mountain cabin and make love to her. But the men have been fooled by Hollywood hype and her screen roles into believing she will be a submissive sex object. Underneath the illusion created by studio public relations personnel, she is a shrewd and tough woman and uses her guile and histrionic abilities to play upon each man's sexual hang-ups and turn them against each other. The plot wins her freedom but results in the deaths of three of the men. The survivor is last seen planning a new fan club for an up-and-coming studio-promoted starlet, once again seeing only the Hollywood illusion and failing to understand the real truth about himself. Muriel Spark's The Public Image (1968), though dealing with international filmmaking, treats the same surface reality or media-created illusion. A beautiful but limited actress billed as the "Tiger Lady" (a name suggesting passion beneath a calm exterior) is in reality totally cool and ruthless; she will use anything, including the desperate suicide of her husband (because he fails to see his place in the created image) to bolster her public persona.

Paul Rosner's The Princess and the Goblin (1966) chronicles two lesbian women from the late 1930's through the early 1960's. When one, a sensitive and intellectual Hollywood star, descends into madness, the other receives all the film

and stage roles that should have gone to the other because she has unconsciously absorbed her mannerisms and abilities and has, in a sense, become her. In a profession where surface reality is all, this is not an inconceivable event.

The other type of novel within this convention treats characters who seek a personal sense of reality. Sometimes the characters are troubled people whose identity problems are compounded by their associations with the unreality of filmmaking. In Paule Mason's Here Lies Georgia Linz (1968), a London psychiatrist helps one of these types, an Academy Award-winning actress from Britain, by analyzing her chaotic and surreal memories, dreams, and monologues and by untangling personal guilt and torment that have become so wound up in her professional life that suicide had seemed the only possible solution. The protagonist of film actress Evelyn Keyes's I Am a Billboard (1971) had grown up believing that the reality of her sad, small-town life could be changed if only she could be like the smiling people on billboard ads, unreal creatures who project the illusion of happiness. A life of trauma precedes her ascent to Hollywood star status and her own eventual appearances on billboards which come with the realization that happiness will always be an illusion, in large part because of her chosen profession.

There is a stereotype that film actors are empty vessels that the characters they play on screen fill up temporarily and that they have no being apart from their roles. That and the search for identity theme are played out in Joanna

Barnes's Who Is Carla Hart? (1973) in which a successful, rich Hollywood star happily married to a screenwriter is shown as a complete cipher without any personality who takes on other people's identities, saying what she believes others want to hear. When her husband rejects her because of this lack of identity, she desperately searches for a "self" through hetero- and homosexual affairs and drugs. Here, as in the Mason book, suicide seems the only solution; it is as though that act will kill the troublesome identity. Both women may even hope, in their delusions, that one of their screen personalities will then emerge as dominant and that happiness will follow. The minor league baseball player turned tough guy film actor in Adam Kennedy's Just Like Humphrey Bogart (1978) is, indeed, able to accomplish that act. When his affair with a movie producer's wife proves unfulfilling and the Swedish actress who is carrying his child goes back to her husband, he feigns suicide and sets out for New Orleans to begin afresh with a new identity, presumably that of a painter.

A novelist/screenwriter in Brian Moore's Fergus (1970), who is confused by a pending divorce, an unsuitable affair, and by what he perceives as a squandering of his talent in Hollywood, is chided by hallucinations of dead ancestors from his Irish past into casting aside his present persona and finding a new identity and purpose in life by espousing traditional, ancestral values. In Nora Johnson's Love Letter in the Dead-Letter Office (1966), a daughter of an enormous-

ly successful Hollywood producer/director seeks details of her dead father's personal and professional life from people who knew him in an effort to learn his true identity, to find proof of his love for her, and to establish some significance for her own life as it relates to his.

Brad Solomon's The Gone Man (1977) is not only modeled cleverly and precisely on the Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain hard-boiled, tough guy novels of the 1930's and 1940's, but it also shows the effects of Hollywood films on the self-image of viewers who, consciously or unconsciously, absorb the personality characteristics of certain film roles into their own identities. In it, a private eye looking for the vanished son of a movie tycoon adapts his demeanor and speech style for each different person and situation encountered, basing his various identities on movie stars in particular roles, e.g., Marlon Brando in Guys and Dolls.

Nowhere is the reality/illusion problem more dramatically combined with the individual identity search than in Paul Brodeur's The Stunt Man (1970). A young AWOL army recruit named Cameron encounters in his flight from reality a film company making a picture on location in a resort. He hopes to merge himself with the filmmakers (creators of illusion) and lose his present dangerous identity which could lead to arrest when the director, Gottschalk, hires him as a stunt man. Soon it is apparent, however, that the script of the film is mirroring the life and identity he sought to leave behind and that the film will end with a stunt that will kill

him. Reality and illusion merge in the film and in his life, as he undertakes ever more dangerous stunts until Cameron can no longer discern if he's a participant or spectator in the film--or in his own life for that matter. The surreal effect of the novel is heightened by Gottschalk's partial blindness; his perceptions of reality are particularly shadowy, and it is unclear if the stunt man is intended by Gottschalk to be a hero or a victim as the two vie with each other for what amounts to control of reality in Cameron's life and as the younger man tries to outwit him and avert his own death.

The nature of reality will always be a central problem in a genre that has as its subject matter the illusion-creating medium of film and which portrays characters who are caught up in manufacturing these illusions and who often live behind highly fabricated personae. I believe the need to work out the reality/illusion dilemma and the desire to capitalize on the names of the famous have caused a number of contemporary Hollywood Novel authors to intermingle the names of real Hollywood personages with the fictional characters, as in John Ehle's The Changing of the Guard (1974); Thomas Maremaa's Studio (1978), in which Robert De Niro and Alfred Hitchcock interact with fictional characters at a studio very much like Universal; Edwin Corley's Long Shots (1981); and Andrew Bergman's Hollywood and Levine (1975). This last novel, set in 1947, shows real people as diverse as Humphrey Bogart and Richard Nixon embroiled in an intrigue involving death on the Warner Brothers lot and blacklisting. One of the

most frequently recurring real life people in Hollywood Novels of all periods is William Randolph Hearst, a man whose power in the film industry, because of his money and the considerable influence of his newspapers, was inestimable and enabled him to promote and control the career of his lover and protégée Marion Davies through the studios. He had appeared as early as 1939 as Jo Stoyt in Aldous Huxley's After Many a Summer Dies the Swan. He is Mr. Thorne in William Woolfolk's Maggie: A Love Story (1971) and Mr. Simon in George Baxt's The Neon Graveyard (1979). But with the advent of the "living history" novel, authors were free to write of him as a character actually participating in the fictional action such as in Edwin Corley's Shadows (1975), Bob Thomas's Weekend in '33 (1972), and Samuel Anthony Pepples's The Man Who Died Twice: A Novel About Hollywood's Most Baffling Murder (1976). In all three, he is an overpowering presence, an omnipotent figure whose sole concern is the welfare and career of Marion Davies.

Stuart Kaminsky has perfected this use of real Hollywood personages within fiction; and he has produced a number of novels, all featuring Los Angeles private eye Toby Peters, which are an intricate blend of reality and fiction. In these novels, the fine line between real and unreal seems to disappear completely. The first, Bullet For a Star (1977), deals with Toby's attempts, with the help of Peter Lorre, to find the blackmailer who has faked pictures of Errol Flynn in bed with a young woman and who is threatening to kill the

swashbuckler. That novel was followed by Murder on the Yellow Brick Road (1978), in which Judy Garland seeks Toby's help when a Munchkin turns up murdered on the set of MGM's The Wizard of Oz; here Toby is aided by Clark Gable and Raymond Chandler. The Howard Hughes Affair (1979) links Toby with Basil Rathbone, who is so immersed in the character of Sherlock Holmes that he has become him; the fine line between reality and illusion is gone forever for him. Al Capone temporarily becomes a good guy and joins Ian Fleming in helping Toby to save Chico Marx from the Mafia in You Bet Your Life (1979). Two tasks call Toby in Never Cross a Vampire (1980): he must save Bela Lugosi's life while fending off vampires, and he must discover who is framing William Faulkner (who is in Hollywood to write screenplays) for the murder of a well-known agent. Babe Ruth and Ernest Hemingway help Toby discover who is blackmailing Gary Cooper into making a grade B western titled High Midnight in the 1981 novel of the same name as the film it is about.

This attention to historical Hollywood figures portrayed either as themselves or under fictional personae is one of the chief characteristics of Hollywood Novels since 1964, particularly within the last ten years. It is a trend, I believe, that may be expected to last. Over the past twenty years, Hollywood Novels and other novels about film (location novels and those set in international cinema industries) reflect: the rather unhappy state of contemporary Hollywood; the logistics of present-day filmmaking; the trends and con-

cerns of our culture in general--drugs, feminism, homosexuality, politics, sexual permissiveness; and ever-shifting fictional and literary conventions, particularly the manipulation of illusion and reality, among others.

Still, what the reading public wants and is being given of late is largely traditional novels set in the golden years of Hollywood per se (the time that is called up for most of us when we hear the term "Hollywood"), dealing with familiar situations and people, depending on rather reassuring stereotypes, and using conventional narrative techniques. Most popular are the large numbers of historical and roman à clef Hollywood Novels and film novels set in earlier times or using real life figures. One thing is certain, the past and present indicate that the Hollywood Novel in some form or another will continue to be a staple in American fiction.



## CHAPTER 4

### The Hollywood Novel as a Regional Genre

The preceding examination of the Hollywood Novel's history and the critique, redefinition, and updating of Carolyn See's work on the form, reveal an established and well-defined American fictional genre with its own unique features. It shares in common with western, detective, mystery, and romance genres a long history of wide popular consumption, while maintaining its own distinct character and occasionally skirting the edges of serious literature.

It is a genre that interfaces with other genres, i.e., historical reconstructions, comic-epistolary stories, detective fiction, pornographic and semi-pornographic novels, romances, adolescent fiction, romans à clef, and religious tracts. Its principal subject matter--the motion picture industry--draws an audience expecting to read of glamour, life in the fast lane, and instant and complete sexual gratification. It depends on certain recurring characters--Jewish moguls, creative directors struggling against commercialism, sinister and predatory front office men, alcoholic and misunderstood screenwriters, starlets made famous by sleeping around, aging and faded movie queens, obnoxious gossip columnists, extras desperate for fame, arrogant screen villains, etc.--which seem grounded enough in Hollywood reality to

somehow almost transcend the term "stereotype." Frequently, the novels closely parallel the lives of the famous and are written by Hollywood insiders. Overall, the novels as a genre parallel the chronological history of Hollywood through the present, where they co-exist with a genre of novels about filmmaking on location and in foreign cinema industries.

The setting for the novels is perceived by readers and authors alike as a suitable climate for the unusual, the unreal, the highly sexual, the preposterous, or even the surreal. In addition, it offers an opportunity for authorial statements about illusion and reality. In fact, I believe it is setting which is the Hollywood Novel genre's most characteristic quality and that viewing the genre as a type of regionalism is one of the most revealing ways to study it as a whole.

Only the Hollywood Novel and the western, among the popular genres, are primarily characterized by a particular region. The western genre does not depend necessarily on a specific geographic location within the great amorphous region known as "The West"; its main requirement for setting is simply nearness to a frontier--in any western location--where there is a potential for the clash between savagery and civilization.<sup>1</sup> To discover, however, the extremely restricted setting of the Hollywood Novel one must take apart

<sup>1</sup>John G. Cawelti, The Six-Gun Mystique (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green Univ. Press, 1970), p. 40.

the "Russian dolls" of western regionalism, southwestern regionalism, California regionalism, southern California regionalism, and Los Angeles regionalism to arrive at the last one: the specific setting of Hollywood, which gave rise to the genre, sustained it, and is still a necessary component, however tenuous, in any novel in the genre.

Although over the past few decades the value of regionalism as a classification has been seriously questioned by literary critics who declare it an extraneous and unnecessary factor in the understanding of a piece of literature, I believe it is absolutely essential to recognize it in this discussion. Despite the fact that novels about filmmaking on location and abroad widely flourish, the true Hollywood Novel could not exist in any other location. As in most literature, there are certain common features at work in Hollywood Novels; and setting may well be the most important ingredient in the novels.

Walter Wells, in his Tycoons and Locusts: A Regional Look at Hollywood Fiction of the 1930s (1973), designates three types of regionalism: (1) one in which region is used arbitrarily as a backdrop for a narrative that could be set virtually anywhere; (2) one in which region provides a backdrop for romantic or colorful inspiration, such as that manifested in Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind; and (3) one in which specific regional characteristics inform the work in an aesthetic way and give it a "claim to the status

of art."<sup>2</sup> I agree with Wells that Hollywood Novels (including others than the ones of the 1930's that he works with) are of the third sort and demand the critic's attention because location or region in them exerts its influences on physical details, motifs, metaphors, plot lines, and characters. The Hollywood Novel genre is as much determined by place as Southern regionalism, Midwestern regionalism, Middle Border regionalism, or any other recognized American literature of a particular locale.

The study of any kind of regionalism implies a belief that a particular place exerts powerful influences on the actions and thoughts of those living in that area.<sup>3</sup> Presumably, these influences would be seen most readily in the characters who people the regional literature, as is true of Hollywood Novels, as I will later show. But also implied is the influence of place on the author's consciousness and writing. Southern California literary historians, such as Franklin Walker, have documented the rich literary tradition of the region and shown that it has long challenged writers to capture its qualities. From the beginning of its English literary history in the late 1700's when Yankee sea captains

<sup>2</sup>Walter Wells, Tycoons and Locusts: A Regional Look at Hollywood Fiction of the 1930s (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Press; London and Amsterdam: Fefer & Simons, 1973), pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup>Fred Erisman, "Western Literary Regionalism: A Status Report," Regionalism and the Female Imagination, 4, No. 26 (Fall 1978), 14.

wrote of the Spanish and Indian culture, emigrant writers have gone there to observe and record the region's exotic offerings. The later written accounts of those lured west in the 1800's by adventure, wealth, or curiosity also told of an alien culture and a physical and climatic region distinct from any other known in America; contemporary geographers and physical anthropologists agree that it is truly unique.<sup>4</sup> And that uniqueness has drawn over the years and still draws to the region, particularly to its capital Los Angeles, myriad writers, all seeking their own expression of wonder or, in some cases, contempt for the region. So, the Hollywood novelist is yet one more in a long line of scribes who have exploited the region's literary potential.

Aside from one or two examples such as Budd Schulberg and William Saroyan, there seem to be few native southern California writers; authors as non-native and diverse as Aldous Huxley, Thomas Mann, Jack London, Malcolm Lowry, John Dos Passos, and Evelyn Waugh have lived in and written of Los Angeles and, on occasion, of Hollywood. So few are the native writers, in fact, that determining what constitutes a southern California or Los Angeles writer has been a controversial issue for some California literary historians, including Frederick Bracher and Franklin Walker. Bracher, for example, insists that the true writer of this region have a

<sup>4</sup>Franklin Walker, A Literary History of Southern California (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1950). p. 2.

particular insider's view, that his writing be of (not about) the area, and his product not be "too aware of its regional expressiveness."<sup>5</sup>

Among the ranks of authors of Hollywood Novels, there are many who, along with their work, could meet at least the first two of Bracher's stipulations; however, there are few novels in the genre which are unaware of the region's "expressiveness" or exoticism and, in fact, there are few which fail to capitalize on the flamboyance of the Hollywood environment that comes almost exclusively from the film industry which is located there. Many of the novelists truly view the area from the inside from positions in that industry as screenwriters or filmmaking personnel, not--as Bracher warns against--"from a safe distance, as one might look at animals in a zoo," but with "some sense of concern for, or identification with, the region."<sup>6</sup> They have a vested interest in Hollywood, perhaps not so much due to affection but rather to the money or status the town can guarantee; so, in a sense, the locale exerts its powerful force over them as they create.

Of particular interest are those well-known novelists who, among dozens of others, were brought or lured to Hollywood to write for the movies and whose firsthand experiences

<sup>5</sup>Frederick Bracher, "California's Literary Regionalism," American Quarterly, 7, No. 3 (Fall 1955), 277.

<sup>6</sup>Bracher, p. 277.

were translated into novels: F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, and Nathanael West, among Americans, and Christopher Isherwood, Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley, and P. G. Wodehouse among Britons. Despite the fact that these authors were non-native southern Californians, it is difficult to imagine novels any more of Hollywood than The Day of the Locust (1939), The Last Tycoon (1941), and The Loved One (1948).

Edmund Wilson complained that "In this city [Hollywood] that swarms with writers, none yet has really mustered the gumption to lay bare the heart and bowels of the moving-picture business."<sup>7</sup> His grouse can generally be dismissed as stemming from a disdain for the west coast as a setting for literature of any kind and for Hollywood in particular as a place where talented east coast writers, wasted and ravaged by the studios, lost their talents. This poem precedes his 1941 The Boys in the Back Room, a treatise in part about such writers: "What shining phantom folds its wings before us?/What apparition, smiling yet remote?/Is this--so portly yet so lightly porous--/The old friend who went west and never wrote?"<sup>8</sup>

There are some who would answer Wilson by noting that Hollywood inspired West and Fitzgerald, for examples, to

<sup>7</sup>Edmund Wilson, Classics and Commercial: A Literary Chronicle of the 1940's (New York: Noonday Press, 1950), p. 48.

<sup>8</sup>Leslie Fiedler, "What Shining Phantom: Writers and the Movies," in Man and the Movies, ed. W.R. Robinson (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1967), p. 304.

produce their most mature and significant fictional work. It was their screenwriting in the studios and their intimate observations of the region while they worked there that provided them with material. It was also no doubt their unhappy experiences and lack of success at screenwriting that gave their Hollywood Novels such bitter tastes; these novels, in a sense, were their revenge against the system. Their books are only two among dozens, such as Richard McKaye's greatly underrated Protrait of the Damned (1954), which were penned by authors working for the studios in Hollywood and which treat the artist alone and awash in a sea of tawdry commercialism. Hollywood provides a microcosm in which to show a recurring twentieth-century literary theme: the isolation of modern man in general and the artist in particular. In these cases, region--Hollywood and its environs, particularly the film industry--is inextricably tied up with character and theme.

Others writing about regionalism in Hollywood Novels, Walter Wells for example, have lumped all aspects of southern California together. For my purposes, his term "Hollywood-Southland regionalism"<sup>9</sup> is inappropriate. He uses this designation in order to include in his discussion such southern California, non-Hollywood novels as James M. Cain's The Postman Always Rings Twice (1934) and Raymond Chandler's Farewell, My Lovely (1940), thereby creating for himself some

<sup>9</sup>Wells, p. 10.



of the same problems of classification that plagued Carolyn See. I believe the actual city of Hollywood itself is the key facet of the genre, and that city is determined by the film industry which is located there.

In her study The American City Novel (1954), Blanche Housman Gelfant notes that a successful "city novel" charts the character of a metropolis "by revealing how it creates and definitively marks the people living in it." For her, "the city becomes a key actor in a human drama" by participating "in the action as a physical place which makes a distinctive impression upon the mind and senses"; by creating "an atmosphere, which affects the emotions"; and by presenting "a total way of life--a set of values and manners and a frame of mind--which molds character and destiny."<sup>10</sup> And in the Hollywood of the genre, the three qualities named by Gelfant are inextricably bound together. The very nature of the physical place and the film industry that exists there create an atmosphere that influences values and manners while shaping character and, eventually, the characters' lives. It may be even more helpful to see the Hollywood Novel as fiction of "determinate space," to borrow film genre specialist Thomas Schatz's term, in which the setting provides more than an arena for conflicts; it represents a symbolically charged arena of action. In other words, Hollywood provides the

<sup>10</sup> Blanche Housman Gelfant, The American City Novel (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p. 4.

"cultural realm in which fundamental values are in a state of sustained conflict," a dynamic world with which the protagonist must come to terms.<sup>11</sup>

The region's perpetual sunlight and mild weather, as well as the arresting and beautiful natural scenery of palm trees, ocean, desert, and wild hills offered a variety of possible backdrops for movie-makers and originally helped draw the film pioneers to Hollywood. To them and still to us today, the area seems golden, lush, paradisiacal. But, in reality, the region is able to exist at all only by fighting back the encroaching desert through sheer will power and heavy irrigation. Drought is a constant possibility. Wide-sweeping fires are frequent. When there is rain, floods are common and their concomitant mud slides are devastating. The threat of earthquakes is omnipresent; latter-day prophets have foretold the area's breaking off the continent and slipping into the ocean.

The precarious stability of the Hollywood environment beneath its Edenic surface is demonstrated metaphorically in the title selection of Gavin Lambert's The Slide Area (1959), a collection of stories about Hollywood which, if arranged chronologically, make up a coherent novel. In it, a few elderly ladies are having a dainty picnic, complete with tea and sweets, atop a pleasant hill. Suddenly and unceremoni-

<sup>11</sup>Thomas Schatz, Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Film-making, and the Studio System (New York: Random House, 1981), pp. 27-29.

ously, they are dumped, unhurt, by a silent landslide into the road some distance below. Here, the geological make-up of the area reinforces the illusion/reality dichotomy at work in the city, in its inhabitants' lives, and in the filmmaking process. Films, the industry's primary product, are illusions just as the city itself is an illusion. Nothing is as it seems, for everything is built on a shaky foundation over which the appearance of stability is cast.

Calder Willingham's Reach to the Stars (1951) depicts Hollywood's illusionary quality through the eyes of a bellboy in an exclusive Hollywood hotel:

He could not decide just what it was, but he had the feeling that if he should close and open his eyes in just the right way, the entire scene would disappear. The park, with its people and beautiful green lawn, lake, scarlet flowers, rows of palms--it all would vanish, it would disappear and leave nothing behind, nothing but a colorless blank mist and utter silence. He could not explain the feeling. There was something peculiar about an enormous city apparently devoted to business but filled with people in vacation clothes, and he knew that all this land had been dry desert before water was brought through the mountains, that it would become desert again if the water stopped. However, that did not explain the mood that hung<sup>12</sup> over this part. It was something else.

The unreality of the Hollywood environment, the filmmaking process, and the films themselves contribute to a feeling of artificiality. First-time visitors, like Britisher John

<sup>12</sup>Calder Willingham, Reach to the Stars (New York: Vanguard, 1951), p. 21.

Schlesinger, director of the film version of The Day of the Locust, report this feeling: "The grass is just a little too green; the ivory is too white; suddenly you come face to face with something and you don't know whether it's plastic or real; the strawberries are just too luscious--everything's larger than life. Are the bodies real? Are the people real? There is almost always some degree of unreality, which is [Hollywood's] attraction."<sup>13</sup>

Contributing to this sense of unreality are the physical details of the city, which seem to have spilled over from the studios' backlots and sets. Erected on the ruins of a Spanish culture, the Los Angeles/Hollywood area has grown up freely and unconstrained. The Hollywood of both novels and actuality is a pastiche of architectural types, encompassing with wild catholicity not only the Hispanic and earlier Indian influences but also Chinese, Byzantine, Moorish, Tudor, Alpine, Medieval, Gothic, Egyptian, Mayan, and Art Deco styles. Often the architects had been lured to Hollywood to design elaborate sets for the movies and their methods carried over into their "real" work outside the studios. These garish and pretentious buildings sit side by side with restaurants shaped like hotdogs, chili bowls, oranges, igloos, nutburgers, and bulldogs. The culmination of this architectural cacophony is Forest Lawn Cemetery--"The Beverly Pan-

<sup>13</sup>Andrew C. Bobrow, "John Schlesinger and 'The Day of the Locust,'" Filmmakers Newsletter, 8, No. 9 (July 1975), 30.

theon" of Aldous Huxley's After Many a Summer Dies the Swan (1939) and "Whispering Glades Memorial Park" of Evelyn Waugh's The Loved One (1948). In the Hollywood Novel, the reader often sees these grotesqueries through the eyes of an outsider like West's Tod Hackett or Huxley's Jeremy Pardage, so that the architecture style is equated with the bizarre ambiance the city can have for newcomers.

In addition, the films turned out by Hollywood studios internalize the natural scenery of all regions and environments so that two sorts of scenery are indigenous to the town: the "real," as described above, and the unreal or fabricated. The created scenery that the movies present as reality is often an illusion in more than one sense of the word. For example, in Liam O'Flaherty's Hollywood Cemetery (1935), studio personnel are sent to Ireland to find and copy an authentic village cottage for a film. However, they return to Hollywood and concoct their own over-blown version when they realize that the audience will reject the authentic as not being "Irish" enough. This type of scenery and the fantastic architecture of Hollywood, seen in both the studio backlots (West's "dream dump" and "Sargasso of the imagination") and in the city itself, provide, as David M. Fine has noted, "a ready-made symbolism for the writer who [wants] to convey a sense of the enormous disparity between illusion and reality,"<sup>14</sup> the principal theme of virtually all Hollywood

<sup>14</sup>David M. Fine, "Landscape of Fantasy: Nathanael West

Novels. When the hickish protagonist of J. M. Ryan's The Rat Factory (1971) finds lodgings with a nudist group in the cathedral facade on the discarded set of The Hunchback of Notre Dame, he notes with wonder that "the bottom was real, the top false." Later, a "smartaleck fellow" tells him, "Everything in Hollywood [is] fake on the bottom and real on the top."<sup>15</sup> The distinction between actuality and appearance in Hollywood, it can be inferred, is determined by one's own perceptions of reality. One may simply see the facade as real, a process akin to what happens when we watch movies. Or one may sense, as does Calder Willingham's bellboy, that the facade is capable of vanishing at a moment's notice so that the real--the bottom--will be revealed, unadorned by illusion.

A certain timelessness also characterizes Hollywood, in the novels and in actuality. One senses a blurring of time in the eclectic architectural styles which cut across all continents and all time periods. Glaring neon signs light up the darkness, merging night and day. The seasons of the year are indistinguishable; the semi-tropical climate and constant irrigation create perpetual summer. The water from the lawn sprinklers sprinkles real plants and artificial plants

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and Los Angeles Architecture of the Thirties," in Essays on California Writers, ed. Charles L. Crow (Bowling Green University Press, 1977), p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>J.M. Ryan, The Rat Factory (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971), p. 42.

alike, the inanimate concrete of drive-ways, and then spills into the swimming pools. There is an apocryphal Hollywood story supposedly told by an old man associated with the movies: "You get up in the morning and you have a little breakfast and you have a little swim and you lie in the sun and have a little lunch and you have a little nap and you have a little sex and you have a little swim and you have a little cocktail and you have a little dinner and you have a little sleep and you have a little sex and you have a little breakfast . . . and suddenly you're sixty."<sup>16</sup> Time in Hollywood seems totally suspended.

Hollywood's filmmaking contributes to this sense of timelessness. At Monroe Stahr's studio in F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Last Tycoon (1941), pictures set in India, Africa, France, on New York's Broadway and an unnamed ocean are being filmed simultaneously. In the studio commissary, a man dressed as Abe Lincoln eats pie amongst contemporarily attired co-workers. National Films studio in West's The Day of the Locust (1939) is recreating the battle of Waterloo; between takes, Napoleon's soldiers mingle with fancy nineteenth-century ladies and extras of other time periods from adjoining sound stages. There are no distinctions between past and present; and because the attention of all Hollywood is riveted on filmmaking, everyone participates in a gaudy,

<sup>16</sup>Charles Loring, "John Schlesinger Talks About 'Locust,'" American Cinematographer, 56 (June 1975), 680.

on-going masquerade ball. It becomes difficult for both character and reader to distinguish between fact and fancy.

Age, likewise, is impossible to detect. Very young children in films are often encouraged to act more mature and wise than their years while older ones are forced, as Shirley Temple was in her gawky adolescent years, to continue playing younger tots. These bizarre variations are often noted in Hollywood Novels. For examples, Nathanael West's Adore Loomis and Tani of Elliot Paul's The Black Gardenia (1952) are precocious children who emulate adults so successfully that they become grotesque parodies. Amongst adults, keeping youthful is an obsession sought after religiously; time must be stopped for them, as it can be in the films turned out by Hollywood. But there are other ways also. Middle-aged actresses like Julie Forbes (believed to be modeled on Joan Crawford) of Gavin Lambert's The Slide Area (1959) and Anny Rood of Patrick Quentin's Suspicious Circumstances (1957) stay eternally youthful through diet, exercise, and cosmetic surgery. Those who are bound by economic and social restraints from enjoying youth-preserving methods, like Horace McCoy's two characters Gloria Beatty in They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1935) and Mona Matthews of I Should Have Stayed Home (1938), are cast out by Hollywood because they look too old. Women seem more victimized by the passage of time than men, for the famous real-life and fictionalized male movie stars go through several generations of ingénue co-stars until they eventually make screen love to women less than



half their ages.

Its seeming timelessness, artificiality, physical unconventionality, bizarre atmosphere, and the reality/illusion dichotomy at work there set Hollywood apart from other large metropolises. In one type of Hollywood Novel, the unusual ambiance of the city is capitalized on as "goofy unreality." There is something charming and utterly harmless about the whacky Hollywood of Harry Leon Wilson's Merton of the Movies (1922), Ben Hecht's I Hate Actors! (1944), Darcy O'Brien's A Way of Life, Like Any Other (1977), and Bill Mahon's The Boy Who Looked Like Shirley Temple: An Autobiographical Novel of Hollywood in the '30's (1980), among others. These novels use characters who are affected in some way, but not damaged, by the climate of Hollywood where all erratic personal behavior is, if not overlooked, at least tolerated. The idea of illusions is pervasive in these novels; but the situations in which the illusions figure, for example, the putting into pictures of Mahon's obnoxious young boy because he resembles the famous little girl star, are usually depicted as madcap or quaint. We can see this in the activities of Merton Gill in Wilson's novel; here is a virtual simpleton who happily goes along making what he thinks are serious pictures while all the time he is being starred in slapstick parodies. "Only in Hollywood," the reader says to himself, smiling and vicariously enjoying the antic behavior of Hecht's troupe of zanies or the western star turned religious zealot in O'Brien's book.

Some novels even insist that Hollywood is only just a little more colorful than the rest of the country. The heroine/narrator of Velda Johnston's House Above Hollywood (1968) reports:

Even though I knew that most people in this part of the country held down jobs, mowed lawns, and worried over bills like everyone else, I had for a moment the sense which often came to me--that southern California was one vast and perpetual carnival, with half the revelers in fancy dress,<sup>17</sup> and the others attending just to gawk.

Even Nathanael West, in a letter to Horace McCoy, was able to acknowledge the normal side to Hollywood:

If I put into The Day of the Locust any of the sincere, honest people who work here and are making such a great progressive fight, those chapters couldn't be written satirically and the whole fabric of the peculiar half world which I attempted to create would be badly torn by them . . . .<sup>18</sup>

This comment reveals that West was aware of the "normal" in Hollywood, but his choice to emphasize and create out of the abnormal shows that side of Hollywood provided him more narrative possibilities and supported his themes more compellingly.

And the town does have its grimmer side. Unlike other cities, which seem to represent stability and civilization,

<sup>17</sup>Velda Johnston, House Above Hollywood (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1968), p. 17.

<sup>18</sup>Carolyn See, "The Hollywood Novel: An Historical and Critical Study," Diss. University of California, Los Angeles 1963, p. 155.

Hollywood is extremely unstable and almost savage. Aubrey Burns, in his study of the regional culture of California, notes that "Cults, isms, crusades, hermits and eccentrics flourish. Spellbinders and prophets abound. Crime is bizarre, abnormal, and frequently related to mysticism or religion."<sup>19</sup> One factor that created this environment was the vast number of immigrants pouring into the area. In Brad Solomon's Hollywood Novel The Gone Man (1977), a woman replies to the detective protagonist who tells her he is a native Angeleno: "You must be the only one. You know what they say. Somebody turned the country on its side and everything that wasn't tied down ended up in California."<sup>20</sup> And people of all sorts were included in the migration, for in the process of westward expansion, it was often the dreamers, the odd balls, the loners, the malcontents who moved first, seeking new places to pursue their eccentricities. When the frontier was exhausted at the Pacific, these people had nowhere else to go to act upon their individual and quirky needs so they stayed in Hollywood and Los Angeles, frustrated and thwarted. And often for these and other immigrants to Hollywood, in literature and real life, the city "is not a place of new beginnings and fresh starts, but of endings, a nightmare world where the line between illusion and reality

<sup>19</sup> Aubrey Burns, "Regional Culture in California," Southwest Review, 17, 389.

<sup>20</sup> Brad Solomon, The Gone Man (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 10.

blurs and nothing and no one are as they appear."<sup>21</sup>

Calder Willingham's newly-arrived bellboy in Reach to the Stars (1951) senses this as he looks around Hollywood:

The sun was shining and people were everywhere, crowds of people with strange, aimless faces. Never had he seen anything exactly like it. It was a technicolor dream, a dream in which there was something wrong, something hanging in the background that was dangerous, unnatural, something that soon would<sup>22</sup> envelop it all, a soft and weird menace.

The commingling of the grotesque populace, the bizarre aura and climate, as well as the dangerous and threatening physical environment creates an atmosphere at once highly unstable and volatile. Nathanael West sensed this when he predicted in The Day of the Locust (1939) wholesale riots by the locusts--those who had come to California to die and who would level Los Angeles and Hollywood with their baseball bats and torches. West's images are echoed thirty-two years later in J.M. Ryan's The Rat Factory (1971), a contemporary novel set in Hollywood during the Depression. Its naive hero Ambrose, a Bozeman, Montana, native who finds work in Hollywood at a cartoon studio similar to Disney's, wanders Candide-like through the city with only charitable thoughts about others. But he is buzzed, harrassed, and nearly killed by drivers who inexplicably pelt him with beer bottles and yell "spick," "greaser," and other racial taunts at the

<sup>21</sup>Fine, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup>Willingham, p. 21.

obviously non-Mexican Ambrose. As he passes a relocation center for workers out of jobs, the men run out, slipping on the ever-present date sludge that covers the sidewalks, wielding baseball bats and screaming, "Go back you white Nigger bastard. There ain't enough work for our own." Later, the "Grenadiers For God" set fire to palm trees close by: "The dry fronds exploded in yellow flame, burning like giant torches."<sup>23</sup>

Here it seems we come to the darkest aspect of the genre; it is something at once frightening and paradoxical. One can assume that readers are drawn to Hollywood Novels because they want to read about the seemingly glamorous town which manufactures the films that enthrall them. But the films depend on illusions, and the city itself is physically and spiritually illusionary. Its superficial glitter is the thinnest of veneers. Hollywood is in reality not glamorous; in addition to containing the normal people referred to by West, it is filled with people Aubrey Burns describes as "misfits, weaklings, failures, eccentrics . . . drifters, dreamers, hoppers . . . adventurers, leaf-turners . . . bridge-burners" who have come west to the region to find the Golden Dream and who are victimized by "a parasitic mass of graspers, promoters, schemers, scavengers, prophets, Messiahs, criminals, wasters, and dead-beats."<sup>24</sup> A certain

<sup>23</sup>Ryan, p. 140.

<sup>24</sup>Burns, p. 374.

almost palpable hysteria permeates the air, compounded by the hostility resulting from cutthroat competition within the film industry and untempered by the wide-spread sense of failure. The novels which ignore these facts are, in a sense, being victimized by the illusions. The truth may be what The Day of the Locust recognized in 1939: that when the illusions fail and the dreams (which are also illusions) collapse for the immigrants to Hollywood--"The Cheated" of the original title who are attracted by the fantasy and happiness seemingly offered by the most pervasive dream source in the world--the anger from rejection seething just below the surface erupts, resulting in wholesale violence.

The violence is private as well as public; West's movie premiere riot can be seen as a metaphor for agony and destruction on a personal level as well. Since the earliest days of the genre, individuals have been lured by the promises made by Hollywood's film industry, only to be cheated, destroyed, or tainted by it and the ideology it embodies that carries over into all aspects of Hollywood life. As early as 1923 in Edgar Rice Burroughs's The Girl From Hollywood, we can see dream-seekers, in this case young girls, entrapped by drug traffickers and murderers. The innocent heroine of Anne Gardner's Reputation: A Story of April Low, Known as "the Wickedest Woman in Hollywood" (1929) is nearly destroyed when she is forced to pose as an immoral femme fatale, a ruse painful and horrible to her. Gloria Beatty of Horace McCoy's They Shoot Horses, Don't They? (1935) is driven by the cal-

lousness of Hollywood to pleading for her own murder. A beautiful actress who murders to conceal her leprosy in Richard Sale's Lazarus #7 (1942) is a principal symbol in the genre of the corruptness and decay lurking beneath Hollywood's lovely surface. Jay Richard Kennedy's Prince Bart; A Novel of Our Time (1953) presents a protagonist whose obsessive belief in the macho image he has been assigned by the movies brings about his death when he comes to see it as a facade. The glamorous life of Hollywood's elite is stripped away in Norman Mailer's The Deer Park (1955) to reveal alcoholism, nymphomania, impotency, homosexuality, and pederasty. A happy and talented young girl is turned by the studio and the Hollywood environment into a miserable, troubled adult with suicidal tendencies in Gavin Lambert's Inside Daisy Clover (1963). Likewise, in Evelyn Keyes's I Am a Billboard (1971), we see a woman whose life after she journeys to Hollywood becomes a nightmare of unwanted pregnancy, abortion, and marriage to a homosexual. An angelic-appearing woman in Brad Solomon's Jake & Katie (1979) is in reality a homicidal maniac who will kill if need be to secure the fortune of her lover in Hollywood. And Joseph Wambaugh's The Glitter Dome (1981) symbolically portrays a Hollywood over which is thrown a superficial glittering mantle underneath which is a sordid environment that weakens or kills all who venture into it.

All these novels, examples chosen chronologically more or less at random to represent a cross-section of the genre,

illustrate two things at work in most Hollywood Novels, either explicitly or obliquely: the particular destructiveness peculiar to the Hollywood environment (but that may be emblematic of the dark side of the American Dream) and the pervasiveness of the illusion/reality dilemma.

The various sub-genres depend largely on these qualities. Historical novels purport to reveal the truth behind illusions and often chronicle the rise and fall of those the city ruins. Comic-epistolary novels capitalize on the irony inherent in the reader's understanding the truth as he reads the letter-writer's reports of Hollywood, which brim with details of the city's illusions that the narrator cannot see through. There is probably no more effective setting than Hollywood available for detective fiction, whose complications depend on no one's--including for a time the detective and, for a longer time, the reader--seeing past the illusions which cloud the crimes; certainly any number or type of Hollywood personages can be effectively destroyed during the course of the plot. Pornography and semi-pornography take advantage of the widely-held and illusionary belief that Hollywood is a place of perfect bodies and sexual capabilities. Partly for the same reason and partly because of the storybook quality assumed by readers for the environment, romances thrive in the Hollywood setting. Ironically, Hollywood, a notorious destroyer of children both fictional and real, is perceived as a desirable setting against which to write adolescent fiction, a place which seems to promise fame



and fortune to the talented young protagonists. Hollywood romans à clef hide behind the illusion of fictional names to reveal the real, although some prey on the reader's faith to present pure fiction under the guise of the tradition; and defeated Hollywood citizens are a staple of this sub-genre. Religious Hollywood Novels claim to bring the truth to the sinful environment by getting "fallen" characters to accept their own particular points of view or illusions.

In analyzing the Hollywood Novel genre, it is possible to speculate that the town of Hollywood--that gave rise to the Hollywood Novel--attracted the illusion-creating film industry because of some inherent quality in the environment that promised it would flourish there. However, I believe it is more accurate to assert that the town has been overwhelmingly influenced by the film industry that grew up there so that in Hollywood, as in the movies, anything is possible but nothing is as it seems. Clearly, there is a symbiotic relationship between the region and the industry which is reflected by the Hollywood Novel genre. In this genre, which is the only American regional genre to be determined by a specific industry, the certainty of clear-cut references in the dichotomy of illusion and reality collapses. What is illusion and what is reality become uncertain, unfixed, and the value attached to each fluctuates. And it is possible to see this blurring of distinctions between reality and illusion that is at work in the Hollywood Novel and the town itself as originating in the films produced there. Because

there seems to be no abating of interest in films or, on the part of readers, in fiction about filmmaking, and because novelists seem drawn to the narrative potential of the genre, particularly to the questions of illusion and reality that it calls up, the Hollywood Novel promises to securely hold its position in American regional literature.

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